GROUND-HOPPER Magazine

ISSUE NO. 31

APRIL 1990

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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON-LEAGUE TRAVELLER!

INSIDE THIS MONTH'S 40-PAGE ISSUE

GROUND-HOPPER Magazine

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*Please note: We **do not** accept telephone enquiries relating to the magazine under any circumstances. All communication **must** be in writing to above address.*

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THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE FOR THE INDEPENDENT NON-LEAGUE TRAVELLER

The EDITORS View

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS.... IT IS:- FLAT 3, 64 HUNTING GATE DRIVE, CHESSINGTON, SURREY, KT9 2DD. Please make sure that all correspondence (except subscriptions and back issues) goes to this address with immediate effect.

Groundhopping is now widely accepted as a good alternative to the traditional role of supporting one particular team home and away, and more each year are joining the increasing numbers turning to the non-league game for their football on a regular basis.

But there are many aspects to groundhopping which contribute to its appeal, ranging from programmes, new grounds, interesting places to visit and socialising with groups of fellow 'hoppers' all of which help to make it all so enjoyable.

Some people place more emphasis on one aspect of the hobby than others, but at the end of the day, as long as they are enjoying what they are doing, that's all that matters.

To some, a ground isn't worth visiting if a programme isn't going to be issued, while to others it is the ground itself that is the most important thing, and to receive a programme is a bonus.

Others look to the location and decide where they are going on the basis that the area concerned is pleasant, while others just go anywhere as long as they can meet up with groundhopping friends en route.

But we have discovered through earlier surveys in this magazine that all groundhoppers do have a common link between them. They all love football, and in particular non-league football.

Personally, my criteria for selecting a game on a Saturday would be based on all of the above aspects because I would need to study the fixtures in detail, and then make my choice on the basis that it was a ground I had not previously visited, and that the issuing of a programme is guaranteed. I am not so fussy about midweek matches because I can understand that for smaller clubs, it is not always possibly for programmes to be issued, but I do like to obtain programmes for all Saturday games wherever possible.

I would also take into account location, the cost of fares, the match taking place, and the opposition. In fact, there are about 7 or 8 things to consider for me when choosing a match on a Saturday to go to.

Midweek matches take on a slightly different range of considerations, because generally speaking, there is less choice anyway, and as each season goes by, it becomes more and more difficult to find a "new" ground to go to that is accessible at night and that you can get back from afterwards.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

The MAY 1990 issue will be published and despatched on Friday 30th March.

It will again be packed with articles and features of interest to groundhoppers and non-league followers everywhere. Here's just SOME of the things we have lined up for the May issue:-

* Special features on WHITSTABLE TOWN (yes, we promise it will appear this time!), HORNCHURCH, and BUXTON.
* As COLNE DYNAMOES race away towards the HFS Loans League championship, we ask:- is their ground good enough for the GM Vauxhall Conference? A special report.
* David Collins popular "Welsh Rabbit" feature will focus on PORTHMADOG + others.
* We have news of our new-look cover and magazine logo starting in the June issue.
* All the regular features will be here, including LEO'S LINES, BEAZER VISA, CLUB SHOP REVIEW, PROGRAMME SCENE, TONY MIDDLETON etc. etc.

So look out for the special MAY 1990 issue of your favourite non-league magazine - out on 30th March 1990. 40 pages of news, views, photos, features and articles. Still only £1.

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PUBLICATION: 30 MAR

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● COVER PHOTO ●

This month's cover features the brick built building at Concord Rangers' ground. Concord play at Thames Road on Canvey Island and compete in the Essex Intermediate League Div.2.

This complex houses the clubroom and changing rooms but there is little else at the ground.

Photo : A.L. MIDDLETON.

FOCUS ON........

HEYBRIDGE SWIFTS FC

Heybridge Swifts play in the Vauxhall Football League Division Two North.
Formed as long ago as 1880, the club have not won honours on a regular basis since their formation, having won the Essex Senior League Championship on three occasions in the early 1980's, the Essex Senior Trophy in 1981-82, and the Essex Senior League Cup the following season. In fact, the club have enjoyed the majority of their success in the last decade with very little to cheer about in the previous hundred years!
Nicknamed "The Swifts" or "The Black and Whites", Heybridge play at Scraley Road, Heybridge, Maldon, Essex. Having previosly competed in the North Essex, South Essex, Essex & Suffolk Border and Essex Senior Leagues, the club made the jump to the Vauxhall-Opel League six years ago where they have remained in Division Two (North).

To reach Heybridge's ground requires a bit of pre-planning and thought because it isn't one of the more accessible places in the league. If coming by car, leave Maldon on main road to Colchester, through village of Heybridge, then turn right following sign to Tolleshunt D'Arcy (Scraley Road). Ground is on right.
If coming by public transport, the best way to reach the ground would be to catch a train to Chelmsford station, turn right out of the station, under bridge to bus station.
From here, go to Bay 6 and catch the 91 or 92 bus to Heybridge which leave at 25 minutes past the hour on Saturdays, with a journey time of approximately 37 minutes (ie; dep. at 12.25 or 13.25, arrive Heybridge 13.02 or 14.02). Fares are about £2.30 return from Chelmsford bus station.
Alight at The Half Moon public house near Heybridge Street. Turn left at the roundabout and go past The Anchor Pub and The Queens Head Pub (unless you have plenty of time and fancy a pint or two!), go past the Heybridge Stores until you come to a garage. Go straight across into Colchester Road and walk for about ½ mile until you reach Scraley Road. The ground can be found about 300 yards down this road on the right hand side.
The ground is clearly visible and there is a sign outside to indicate this fact. A large car park area by the entrance will cater for the average crowds at Scraley Road which usually number 130.
The ground entrance is at the end of the car park, and admission to First Team games this season is £1.40.
Once inside, you will notice the large clubhouse and social club which is spacious, divided into two with a bar and TV room etc. As it is situated behind the goal, a good view of the pitch can be had from inside the clubhouse. The brick-built building looks quite smart and also houses the dressing rooms etc. The ground is very typical of a lower division Vauxhall Football League club, with the only cover being along one side where there is a small stand which will hold about 200 spectators. This has a white angled roof and about eleven white supports at the front. At the base of the stand is a painted area clearly showing the name of the club (see photo). Inside there are a couple of bench-type rows of seating, with the centre area having a few tip-up seats made of plastic. These are used mainly for club officials. There are dug-outs on the far side of the ground. As with all grounds in the Vauxhall Football League, there is a concrete walkway around the ground, and the stand side of the ground is unusual in that houses virtually back onto the side of the pitch, so residents must get an excellent view on matchdays!



RIGHT:
The Main Stand along one side of the ground at Scraley Road, home of Heybridge Swifts.
Photo: D.K. WEST.



LEFT:
The entrance to the ground at Heybridge Swift's Scraley Road stadium.
Photo: STEVE KING.

The pitch is railed off on all four sides, and the club has floodlights on either side of four pylons, each holding three lamps. Behind the far goal there is another football pitch, only separated by the perimeter railing and two concrete steps of terracing which are situated immediately behind the far goal. There is a well stocked tea-bar adjacent to the clubhouse behind the goal which is open throughout the match, serving tea, coffee, excellent burgers at 50p, etc. The rest of the ground is rather basic with just flat grass standing.

Programmes are issued for all first-team games at Scraley Road, and these cost 30p for a very newsy and informative 36 pages, with a strikingly colourful cover showing the stand at the ground. It has good statistical content, plenty about the opposition and although heavy on advertising, is very up-to-date.

If coming from London, there are numerous trains to Chelmsford leaving Liverpool Street at 10.42, 10.44, 11.15, or 11.45, arriving at Chelmsford at 11.17, 11.34, 11.50 and 12.17. Coming back after the game, there are trains from Chelmsford at 18.04 and 18.35, arriving Liverpool Street at 18.47 and 19.16. Fares to Chelmsford are about £5 for a cheap day return, with discounts for Network Card holders. There is a bus back from Heybridge at around 5.20, getting back to Chelmsford at 18.00 in time for the 18.04 train to London.

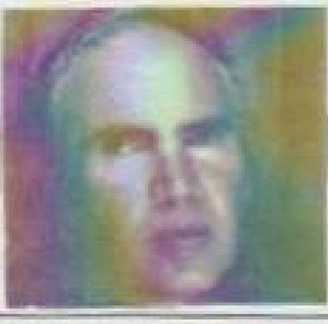
The ground telephone number of enquiries is (0621) 852978, and the Secretary is Dennis Fenn who can be contacted on (0621) 854798.

Visiting Heybridge is well worth it, because it is a little bit out of the way and does require some pre-planning, and although there isn't a great deal in Heybridge itself (there are though, two or three pubs!), and the ground is very typical of a lot of VFL grounds, it makes an interesting day out.





The entrance to the Social Club at Heybridge Swifts.
Photo: STEVE KING.

The **TONY**  **MIDDLETON** Column

THE MONTHLY COLUMN FOR ALL HOPPERS

<u>TOLERANCE</u>

I collect non league badges, but until recently new issues were few and far between. In the last couple of seasons this field has enjoyed a gratifying upsurge, thanks to the drive of people like Toby Jackson, whose enthusiasm persuaded countless clubs to produce a badge. I always looked forward to his badge features in Groundhopper, and was, to put it mildly, disgusted, when a few bigots, with plastic inserts where their brain should be, hounded his badge column out. It makes collecting badges just that little bit harder. And why shouldn't Toby name those clubs and persons who have kept his money and failed to send him what he had paid for. At least it stops other collectors throwing money down the drain by sending for something they have little or no hope of getting.

I have to confess that my own tolerance level was severely tested recently when I read that Hellenic League club Newport had a badge available. Now, I consider Newport to be a new club, and as far as I am concerned they are totally unconnected with the old Newport County. So just why a small amateur club, only a few months old, should want to ask £10.50 for a badge, is beyond my comprehension. I ask myself, is it merely the case of a little club with delusions of grandeur, or is someone trying it on.

None the less, I feel that no one should criticise something they don't like, or, more importantly, do not understand. Take Chris Ashbridge. He clearly enjoys writing about his travels. Personally speaking, I like to read about someone's continental wanderings. And anyone who writes and says they don't want any more continental features are deceiving themselves if they think they are speaking for the rest of us. They are not, they are speaking for themselves, and themselves alone. Groundhopper would be a pretty boring magazine if everybody's pet hate was removed.

I recently went to Ilford's first match at Cricklefields, and, as would be expected there was a very large following of casual visitors. I was quite surprised, listening to the pre-match conversations, just how many regularly like to hop across the channel to Belgium, Holland and Germany. Most preferred to go via Dover or Folkestone, but, let me give a word of warning to anyone thinking of travelling by P & O. The motorcycle press recently reported the experiences of two people who elected to travel by this route. They had a journey of some 300 miles just to get to the port in the first place. They not surprisingly booked cabins, after all, it was a seven hour crossing. When their booking was confirmed, they found that no cabins were available, but they had been allocated reclining seats. Now I think it is fair to say that this is hardly the same thing. After all, if you order a bed you would hardly expect to be given a chair to sleep on. So they cancelled. And that seemed reasonable to me, since the ferry company had been unable to supply what they had ordered. I was amazed to learn that P & O would not

give them their money back, although they could travel on another sailing. The last I heard, they went with another company, but were still arguing the toss with P & O. Now I don't know what was in the small print on the order form, nor, to be honest, do I really care. But, let everyone be warned, if you book with P & O, state clearly that, unless they can supply everything you want, then you do not want to go ahead with the booking, and tell them not to bank your money.

A SOUTHERN SAFARI

Let's go away for a week said Lesley. Great idea, I said, rushing upstairs for the Caledonian MacBrayne brochures. Bournemouth, she said. I put my foot down with a firm hand. Bournemouth is for geriatrics, it's the Hebrides or nothing. When we got to Bournemouth we managed to find accommodation (not easy, most places were solidly booked.) And I was in for a pleasant surprise. Six matches in a week. Plus three motorcycle meetings, and the Dorset Steam Fair.

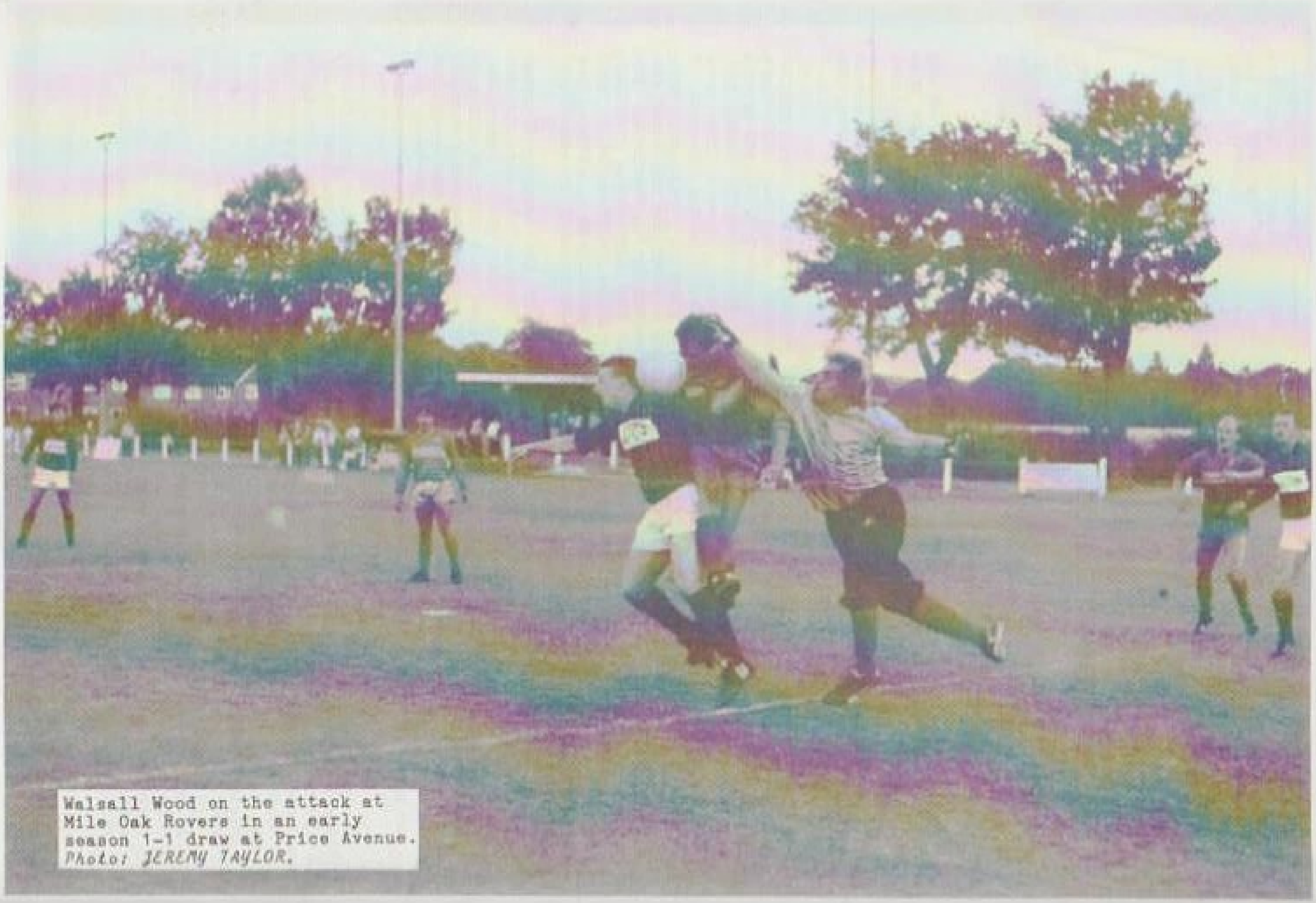
First on the agenda was Bashley New Forest, (that is the name on the programme). I did not see any signposting to the village, but once found, you could hardly miss the ground. New floodlighting, new clubhouse, and everything very neatly kept. No club shop though. Best of all, for Lesley, the New Forest was nearby, and she could happily play with the New Forest ponies which wandered all over the side roads.

Two matches on the Monday, starting at Poole, where a crowd of 546 saw them go down to Trowbridge. A small club shop, but the badges are cheap plastic inserts, a waste of money at 80p. I have always liked the Poole stadium, and feel that, with a successful team, they would command excellent support. On to Swanage, where a three hour queue for the ferry meant that we had to drive in via Wareham. I have not been to Swanage for years, and the once tiny village I knew is now a large sprawling mass of humanity. Head for the North Car Park, and the entrance to the ground is immediately to the left. The officials made us very welcome, and I got the impression that this club has potential to go higher. No programmes, although they hope to have some soon. After watching Chard Town lose 2-0, getting out of Swanage took two hours, thanks to some gigantic traffic jams.

With the choice of Hamworthy or Parley Sports on the Tuesday, I chose to go to the speedway, and also managed to pick up the oldest hitch hiker in the world, an 85 year old lady. Can anyone beat that. Wednesday saw us initially at the Dorset Steam Fair (attendance here was 200,000 over five days,) and then back to Bournemouth for their friendly match with Greenfield. No programmes, but the new clubhouse is excellent, serving hot and cold meals, and the ground is well maintained. The floodlights were none too good though.

On the Friday we went to Portland Bill, and on arrival we were confronted with over 50 telescopes. It turned out that a Rose Coloured Starling had flown in from southern Asia, the first of its kind in Britain this year. Two hours later we had found plenty of telescopes lying around abandoned as their owners dashed hither and thither, but no Rosie. We eventually found Rosie the following evening, very obligingly sitting on a nearby rooftop. In between we went to Bridport for their match with Devizes. Bridport have recently rejoined the Western League, and a 200 plus crowd saw them win 3-0. Our final match took us to Wareham Rangers, whose Dorset Combination ground is very much of a let down, a roped off pitch in the middle of the council recreation ground. Bournemouth is not quite the place I would want to go to for a holiday, but there is plenty of choice for matches, and the week went all too quickly. I might even go again.

Continued on page 16

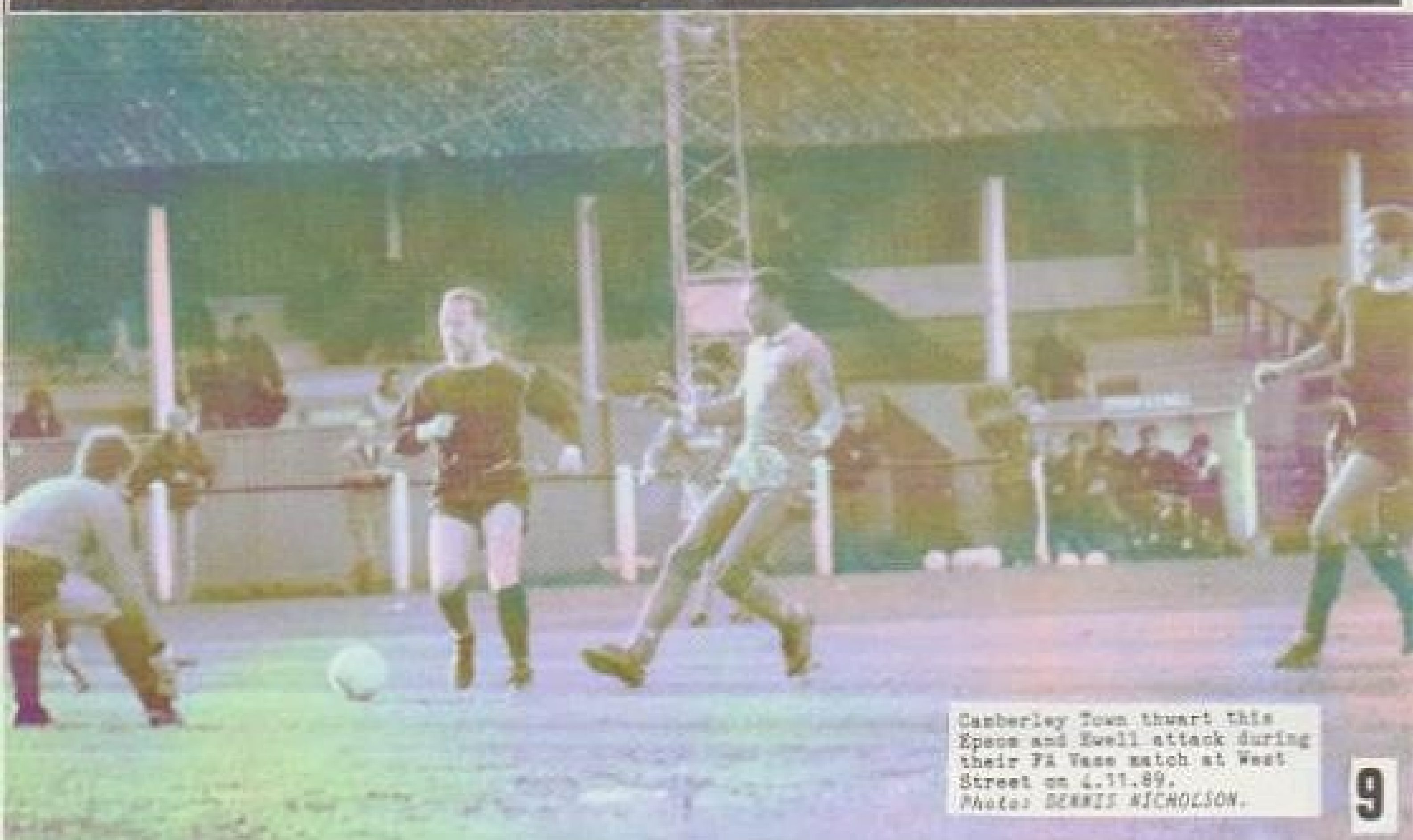


Walsall Wood on the attack at Mile Oak Rovers in an early season 1-1 draw at Price Avenue. Photo: JEREMY TAYLOR.



Malden Vale 'keeper Peter Dale clears from Molesey striker Mickey Rose at Grand Drive in a Vauxhall Football League Div.2 (South) match on 1.1.90.
Photo: DENNIS NICHOLSON.

NON-LEAGUE ACTION



Camberley Town thwart this Epsom and Ewell attack during their FA Vase match at West Street on 4.11.89.
Photo: DENNIS NICHOLSON.



David Collins'

WELSH RABBIT...

All the latest news and gossip from the Welsh non-league scene

Nothing much seems to go right for BLAINA WEST SIDE, perennial strugglers at the bottom of the bottom division of the Abacus League. They have finished in the bottom two for the last three seasons and are on course for the wooden spoon again. Yet at the start of the season there was hope. They picked up a few points in the autumn and Tynte Rovers looked well and truly anchored below them. But then Tynte withdrew from the league, their record was expunged......and after that Blaina, having lost three of their seven points, looked in a much worse position !

The problem seems to be that losing has become a habit for them, hence they cannot attract players, and those they do have lack confidence in a big way. Once again, their ability to survive as Abacus League members must be questioned, though actually the league has no real reason to show themn the door, with Newport County reserves, Barry Town and Tynte Rovers all having created vacancies in the last twelve months. While I'd like to see the Abacus League admitting some of the aspiring county league sides, it would be sad if that happened at the expense of Blaina.

Blaina is a rather remote place, near the top of the valley of the Ebbw Fach, north of Abertillery. Despite its remoteness, it is remarkably easy to reach from both Newport and Cardiff, on the National Welsh express buses which run to Brynmawr. The town is



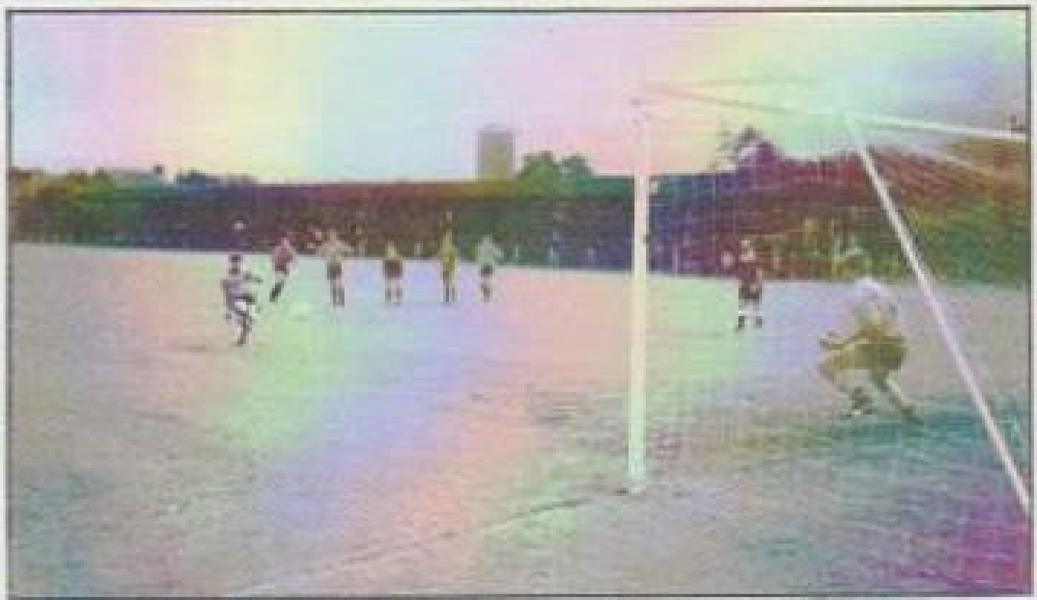
LEFT:
Blaenavon 'keeper Saunders saves his side during the 1-1 draw at Blaina West Side, Abacus Welsh League 1st Division 8.4.89.
Photo: DAVID COLLINS.

split in half by the main road, and the football club's Dyffryn Park ground is to the left of this coming from the south. Although there is no cover, viewing is helped by the broad terrace steps along one side of the pitch. Opposite is the fast-flowing river (from which balls are frequently retrieved) and an extremely steep mountainside.

I saw Blaina play early in the season at CARMARTHEN TOWN, a club at the other end of the spectrum of Abacus Division One members. Given their facilities, and the size and status of the town, it is astonishing that Carmarthen Town are in this division at all. They have set themselves a target of National Division status in three years, and to achieve that they really need promotion to the Premier this season. That looks quite achievable at the moment, given a good run of results.

The Richmond Park ground is worthy of National Division soccer, with a large covered stand running the length of one side of the pitch, painted in the club's colours of

RIGHT:
An attractive view of Carmarthen Town's Richmond Park ground as Blaina 'keeper Morgan faces up to a penalty.
Photo: DAVID COLLINS.



amber and black. The ground is close to the town centre, on the main road towards Lampeter.

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The Welsh Cup has now reached quarter final stage, following a fascinating Fourth Round which threw up three North-South confrontations. I saw two of these, the first being the finely balanced clash at Llanelian Road between Colwyn Bay and Barry Town, settled in Barry's favour by a second-half penalty. The following day the clash of the Principality's top two non-league sides failed to live up to expectations, with Bangor City gaining a comfortable 3-0 win at Merthyr's Penydarren Park.

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There still seems to be a chance of the long-awaited restructuring of North and Central Wales domestic soccer - the "Cymru Alliance", for which a potential sponsor already



LEFT:
Colwyn Bay v. Barry Town in the Welsh Cup 4th Round.
Photo: DAVID COLLINS.

exists. Following the failure of various administrators to make real progress, the clubs seem to be taking matters into their own hands, with officials of forward-looking Mold Alexandra having called a meeting of the top 17 clubs from the Welsh Alliance, Manweb and Wrexham Area leagues.

Finally this month, I'd like to commend to you a new magazine concentrating on Welsh soccer at all levels. "The Welsh Footballer" will contain results, tables and features from a variety of leagues - subscription details from the Editor Mel Thomas at 2 Hafod Ruffydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd.

David Collins

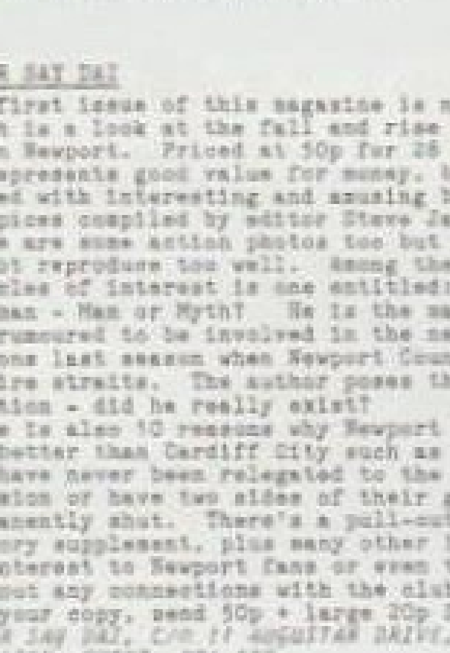


Each month we review books, magazines, handbooks, or any publication with a non-league connection. If you would like your publication reviewed on this page please write to: Groundhopper Magazine.



NEVER SAY DAI

The first issue of this magazine is now out, which is a look at the fall and rise of soccer in Newport. Priced at 50p for 28 pages it represents good value for money, being packed with interesting and amusing bits and pices compiled by editor Steve James. There are some action photos too but these do not reproduce too well. Among the articles of interest is one entitled:- Jerry Sherman - Man or Myth? He is the man who was rumoured to be involved in the negotiations last season when Newport County were in dire straits. The author poses the question - did he really exist?
There is also 10 reasons why Newport AFC are better than Cardiff City such as Newport AFC have never been relegated to the 4th Division or have two sides of their ground permanently shut. There's a pull-out club history supplement, plus many other items of interest to Newport fans or even those without any connections with the club at all. For your copy, send 50p + large 20p SAE to: *NEVER SAY DAI, C/O 11 AUGUSTAN DRIVE, CAERLEON, GWENT, NP6 1DD.*



SCOTTISH NON-LEAGUE REVIEW

At 60p for 28 pages, this magazine takes a look at the non-league scene north of the border, paying particular attention to statistics and results, etc. There's full details of the Scottish Junior Cup including a full results service, a news round-up from the various regions, a Highland League news page, and in the Jan & Feb issue there is a list of pre-season matches played involving non-league clubs, many showing attendances too. Particularly interesting, especially for programme collectors, is the list of all Scottish non-league clubs to have issued programmes. Updates and amendments are promised in future issues. There are many one-off articles such as a feature on Hall Russell Utd of the Aberdeenshire Amateur League Div.1. and Part 3 of the history of Ayrshire Juniors in the Scottish Cup. All in all, a well put-together publication, excellent value and will be of interest to non-league followes south of the border as well as those in Scotland. For the next two issues, send a cheque or postal order for £1.50 (payable to Stewart Davidson) to:- *12 WINDSOR ROAD, RENFREW, SCOTLAND, PA4 0SS.*



NHS - NEW HOME STADIUM

As fanzines go, this is one of the better ones currently available in non-league football. Priced at 50p for 36 pages, there is very little advertising, and most pages are packed with a mix of articles, amusing stories and cuttings. As with most fanzines, unless you support that particular club, many of the 'in-jokes' pass you by, but there is still plenty of general interest within its pages to keep you interested.

It is a magazine written by and for Kingstonian supporters, and many of the articles have in-jokes that 'outsiders' may not find terribly amusing, but it is worth a read anyway.

Particularly good is a feature entitled "From where we were - waving goodbye to the championship" and there are several other articles worth reading. Very good value at 50p, and with the smaller-style type used, there's certainly plenty to read. Issue 12 is now available by sending 50p + 26p stamp to:- *NHS, 14 HUNTERS ROAD, CHESSINGTON, SURREY, KT9 1RU.*

GROUNDS IN FOCUS



TOP : STAMCO - Pannel Lane (Sussex County League Div.2.)
Photo : D.R. WEST.
BELOW : DARLINGTON CLEVELAND BRIDGE - Neasham Road (Northern League Division 2) *Photo : COLIN PEEL.*



HOPPER POST

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO HAVE *YOUR* SAY.

What do you think of the magazine? Do you have any amusing groundhopper tales? Do you have any comments about Non-League Football in general?

Write to:

Hopper Post,
Groundhopper Magazine,
Flat 1,
64 Hunting Gate Drive,
Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2DD.

GIVE IT A TRY!

I would like to recommend a visit to Milton United who are playing their first season in the Federated Homes League. At present, immediate promotion to the premier division is a distinct possibility.

Judging by the game that I saw, a Berks and Bucks Intermediate Cup tie against Windsor and Eton reserves, they are playing some good football, and that in pouring rain.

Although cover is limited at their ground, the locals were only too happy to share the 'grandstand' (maximum capacity a dozen!) with me. The club certainly scores well in terms of hospitality.

Facilities include a clubhouse, tea-bar and additional cover adjacent to the changing rooms. Although not a league match, a decent 20 page programme was issued and included within the admission price of 50p. It would seem that their status with the county FA is something of an anomaly and their days as an intermediate club are probably numbered.

Milton, a single street village, lies between Didcot and Abingdon but has been put on the map by a large business estate. The village includes a manor house, a church, and, I am sure you will be pleased to hear, a pub!

Access to Milton is easier by car than public transport as the ground is just off the A34 between Newbury and Oxford and visible from same. Railhead for the village is Didcot Parkway and a bus service runs to the business estate, but at 2½ miles the station is not out of range of the enthusiastic walker!

STEVE CARDGE,
BASINGSTOKE, HANTS.

THE SHEFFIELD CONNECTION

Despite being a regular subscriber to your excellent magazine, I have noticed a lack of articles covering football in my area. So rather than moan about it I thought I should put pen to paper and try and rectify the situation.

Just over 129 years ago Sheffield FC and Hallam met in a competitive match for the first time. Everyone knows that Sheffield is the oldest soccer club in existence, but the fact that the two are again in the same division of the Northern Counties East League may have passed by un-noticed outside of South Yorkshire.

The first meeting between the two sides this season took place at the temporary home of Sheffield FC on Sheffield Weds. training ground on Saturday 6th January.

As sometimes happens with games of this type, the match fell a little below the expectations of the 200 crowd. Sheffield's Mark Walshaw scored the only goal from a penalty, but Mark was later to turn villain when he was sent off for retaliating to a foul by Hallam's Andy Davis.

Looking back over the history of this fixture another 'sending off' made headlines in 1862, during a game played in aid of the Lancashire Distress Fund. A player named Creswick punched an opponent. Waterfall threw down his waistcoat and retaliated and a free for all ensued. Despite calls for his dismissal, Waterfall was merely sent back in goal for the remainder of the game. Is this how Peter Shilton learned his trade!!

Unfortunately as is the state of today's game, off the pitch problems threaten the future of both clubs. Sheffield need to spend thousands on seating and floodlights, or face instant relegation. Meanwhile Hallam have to try and raise £50,000 to extend the lease on their Sandygate ground and like Sheffield, face instant relegation because of a lack of floodlights.

With the gate receipts from Saturday's derby amounting to £111.00, it is not difficult to appreciate the problems these two famous clubs have to overcome to survive.

PAUL HAYWARD,
BURNCROSS,
SHEFFIELD.

WHAT ABOUT A REPLY!

In issue 29 of your magazine, Clapton is named as one of the Top 10 grounds by a reader. Chris Oakley finds the people who run the club very warm and laid back with hospitality of the highest order.

I wonder if these are the same people who have ignored my letters and stamps for reply when asking about badges.

I ordered the three as soon as they were advertised, and sent them a cheque.

After a while I read Toby Jackson's notes that other people hadn't received their badges, and this prompted me to write to Clapton which I have done several times to no avail.

Toby Jackson seems to be the only one as well as myself who is infuriated by their conduct. Other clubs I have sent to have always sent the badges promptly and I hope there are no other clubs who act in the way that Clapton do by taking money from people and supplying no goods in return.

ERIC SNOW,
WINKFIELD,
NR. WINDSOR, BERKS.

IT'S BEEN A GOOD GAME

I am a pensioner of 75 years old. I have watched football since I was about 9 years old with just a few gaps in between. I also write a little, and have produced a poem about non-league football.

I hope you like it, as it shows what I think of soccer in the lower grades, a wonderful place to be on a Saturday afternoon.

"You will stand on concrete weathered and
split
Where a lick of paint would not come amiss
The toilets are adequate, but that's all I
guess
The attendance is frugal, but the atmosphere
bliss

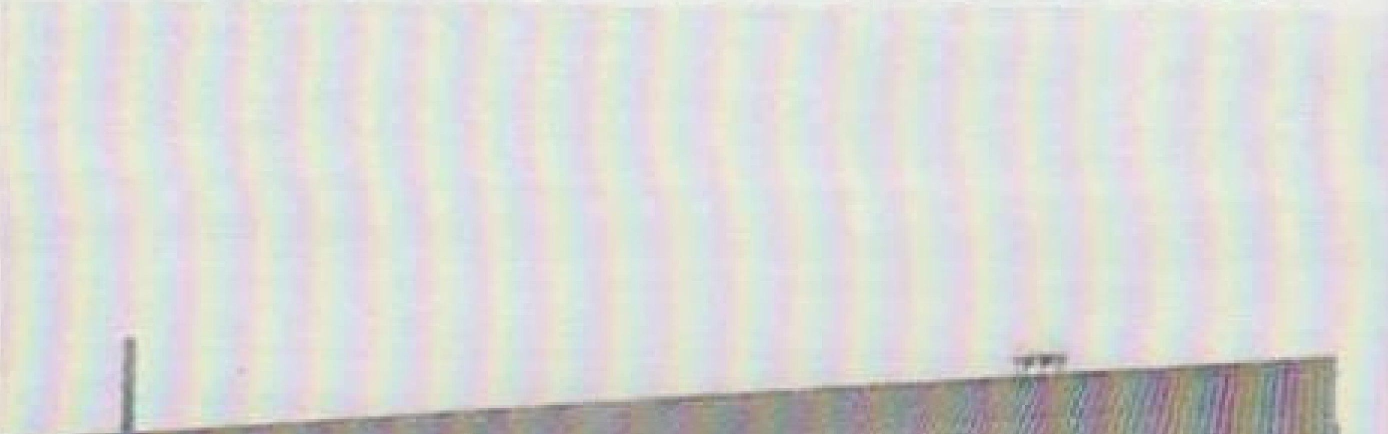
There's an air of bustle about the place
Programmes, bright coloured, tote tickets
to sell
Though the weather be cold, hospitality's
warm
Non-League grounds have this message to tell

There's something quite special huddled under
a shed
Where holes in the roof make it draughty and
damp
Clutching a drink in a cup made of plastic
While rain on the pitch turns it into a swamp

You may travel solo, but you're never alone
Like all the regulars you'll soon feel at
home
Whatever your county, whatever your creed
You're one of a company, a specialist breed
You love your football whatever the standard
Win, lose or draw it's always the same
At the final whistle you get back to normal
And agree with each other it's been a good
game".

LESLIE JARVIS (75), WORKSOP, NOTTS.

GROUNDS IN FOCUS



ST. AUSTELL (Jewson South Western League) - *Photo: STEVE MOORE.*

THE TONY MIDDLETON COLUMN (from page 7)

ARE WE DECEIVING OURSELVES

I do not want Darlington to win the Alliance League at the first time of asking and make an instant return to the Football League. Nor did I want Lincoln to bounce straight back. I have nothing against either of these clubs, and, now that my own club are no longer among the non-league elite, it matters little to me who gains promotion. But it makes a mockery of the entire system when the team that is relegated yo-yoes back. It was long felt that the Alliance was equal to the Fourth Division, but it seems that unfortunately this is not the case. My impression is that there is still a tremendous gap between the two leagues. And I don't think it helped matters when Maidstone went up last season. I don't deny them their right to move up, they earned it by winning the league. (Mind you, so did Redbridge, but the Alliance did not see it that way.) But it worries me that other clubs will get the wrong impression of non league football when they visit Maidstone. For here is a ground no better than Southern League standards.

Certainly the weaker teams have quickly disappeared, and playing standards in the Alliance are at a high level. I am now reduced to watching Isthmian League football, and there is a world of difference between this and the Alliance. As it stands at the moment, I cannot think of any teams in the feeder leagues that are capable of being a power in the Alliance in the immediate future.

I also think that the majority of teams who have new grounds, or who are intending to move soon, are setting their sights far too low. Take Ashford, Kingstonian, Weymouth. Nice grounds, no one is denying it. But they are all so small. I seem to remember that the police imposed a 3,500 crowd limit on a Weymouth v Yeovil game not all that long ago. And if what I read is correct, the new grounds at Wycombe and Yeovil, when built, will scarcely have sufficient accommodation for Fourth Division football. We should be looking towards grounds with an ultimate capacity of 60,000 plus, not 6,000.

I certainly feel that automatic promotion into the Football League was long overdue. But I also think that only a handfull of teams are really capable of becoming anything more than an average Fourth

Continued on page 18





Herne Bay's Nigel Pointon heads towards goal during his club's 0-1 Winstonlead Kent League home defeat to neighbours Whitstable Town on New Year's Day.
Photo: D.R. WEST.

NON-LEAGUE ACTION



Ron Cutmore heads Halstead's 2nd goal in the 42nd minute but they still go down 3-2 at Cornard United's Blackhorse Lane in front of 150 spectators.
Photo: A.L. MIDDLETON.

MY 10 FAVOURITE GROUNDS
VISITED IN NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL

This month: RICHARD BOGGIS (BISHOPS S'TFORD)

As an avid supporter of Bishops Stortford of the Vauxhall Football League, I find myself at many London grounds. When Bishops Stortford aren't playing I travel locally in Essex and Hertfordshire to non-league grounds. Also when on holiday I try to visit grounds, even in the 'close season' just to take photos.

Choosing only 10 grounds is difficult as every single one brings back memories of a great day out come rain or shine.

1. ENFIELD : I travelled to Enfield recently worrying about whether snow would cause another postponement. The ground is large and the clubhouse was welcoming. The large crowd, both inside the ground and the clubhouse, were very noisy and added to an already electric atmosphere.

2. SAFFRON WALDEN : On my second visit to the ground I actually got to see a game. The first time a mixture of fog and water meant a postponement. The club shop was shut on my visit for a morning Bank Holiday match but was open in the afternoon for a youth match. The combination of seeing two games in a day at the same ground, great hospitality and the compact ground produced a day to remember.

3. DULWICH HAMLET : This massive ground was almost empty when I went but I must say I enjoyed my day there. I spent about half an hour in the bar before the game, but thought that the completely advert-free programme a little odd. There was also a photo of a game from 1940 included!

4. LEYTON WINGATE : Yes, another London club. A large clubhouse before the game welcomed me with Wingate supporters all talking about the previous week's game. A small club shop with many programmes and non-league publications was obviously the result of a lot of effort from club enthusiasts. The ground itself is tiny. Behind one goal there is only room for one row of people, but this adds to the homeliness of the club. Small grounds seem to amplify noise and atmosphere.

5. ST. ALBANS CITY : Most definitely my favourite ground. It is compact but has a large stand down one side. The club shop is a shed-type with windows through which items can be purchased. The clubhouse is friendly and welcoming. As well as the ground being first class, I must add a sentence about the programme which is great value, being packed with articles, statistics and information.

6. BRAINTREE TOWN : After only an hour's bus ride I arrived at Braintree bus station. The football club obviously doesn't play a very big part in the local community as the first two people I asked for directions said they didn't know a football team existed!

When I eventually found the ground I saw a fairly large crowd. I reached the club shop which was inside a large caravan. In got chatting to a chap about various aspects of the club which was quite interesting. To my surprise, the bar shut at half-time, but I would recommend Braintree to anyone.

7. BROMLEY : This brings back memories of a beautiful sunny day and a great game - mainly because Stortford won 3-2, a victory over the then league leaders. The clubhouse was dark but pleasant, and at the club shop I completed metal badge and programme swaps as well as purchasing the club magazine. Bromley's ground looks old but this proved irrelevant because it was outweighed by the hospitality and the best game I have ever seen.

8. WISBECH TOWN : I went to Wisbech for the last game of the 1987-88 season for the final of the East Anglian Cup. The ground has cover on all four sides, and there is covered seating on one side. There is a large barn-like stand here. The large crowd prompted police presence which I regret to say was needed. The match ended 1-1 after extra time and there was then a penalty shoot-out. I would like to go back to Wisbech for a league game and be able to move freely in what is an excellent ground.

9. SAWBRIDGEWORTH TOWN : After having planned to visit Stansted FC and missing my bus I was forced to run the entire length of Bishops Stortford to get to the railway station. I arrived at Sawbridgeworth at 2.55pm. Due to a 2.30pm kick-off I had missed 25 minutes. To my dismay there were no programmes left. I managed to obtain one later though.

There is no stand at Sawbridgeworth but it is fully railed off. The crowd of quiet supporters stood enthralled by a thrilling match against Canvey Island. Sawbridgeworth may not be the most modern or best equipped ground but it was certainly a good day out.

10. BISHOPS STORTFORD : Maybe a little biased in my selection of my own club's ground but that's the way it is. Both goal ends at Stortford are covered. Along one side is a large stand with many seats. Above these are executive boxes and the press area where home games are relayed to the local hospital. The other side offers uncovered standing. There is a great club shop which is in the form of a large caravan. I honestly feel it is the best club shop in the league with the best range of league and non-league programmes and souvenirs for miles around. There is an external tea-bar as well as another one in the clubhouse itself. The social club is homely with football memorabilia behind the bar. I have only been following Bishops Stortford for about two years but our Rhodes Avenue 6,000 capacity ground holds many memories for me.

THE TONY MIDDLETON COLUMN (from page 16)

Division outfit. Barnet, Kettering, Boston, yes. Yeovil and Wycombe, possibly, if they can get their grounds sorted out. We are surely deceiving ourselves if we think that automatic promotion is going to make any radical change at the top end of the Football League.

CLUB SHOP REVIEW No.7



● With The Shop Spy ●

RUSHDEN TOWN

The Club Shop at Beazer Homes League club Rushden Town is situated at the top of the open terracing on the side of the main stand at Hayden Road. It is to the right of the tea-bar and is a wooden construction (see photo above), rather unusually shaped being an eight-sided building of the walk-in kind. Although it is rather small, the first thing noticeable is the large number of Rushden Town souvenirs available. These are mainly displayed on the back wall but are easily viewed from the customer's side. Pens, scarves, rosettes, hats, etc are all on sale as well as Rushen Town metal badges. There are a limited number of other club's badges on sale too. The programmes are mainly displayed on the front counter in plastic storage boxes for easy viewing. Current season Rushden Town homes are plentiful, and there is a limited number of general non-league programmes although these are mainly of the larger clubs. There is a box also of general Football League programmes from previous seasons.

The staff are friendly and prices reasonable although as with many club shops of this kind, unless you are right at the front, it is very difficult to see the programmes on the counter. The shop also sells copies of the 1990 Non-League Yearbook, plus one or two other souvenirs.

It is quite a good shop that seems to cater for souvenirs of Rushden Town more than for general non-league programmes, but having said that, the souvenir selection is very good, with a few interesting items on display.

RATING OUT OF 10 6

HORNCHURCH

This is a brand new club shop at Hornchurch's Bridge Avenue ground, and is a separate section at the end of their new clubhouse which opened a few weeks ago to replace the old one which burned down last year.

At the time of going to press, it is still not officially open because it is at the top of a grass hill and the window counter is at the back of the building facing the pitch. Unfortunately, because it is so high up, steps are required before anyone can view the items available in the shop, and at present, shop manager Ron Quantock is still awaiting delivery of these.

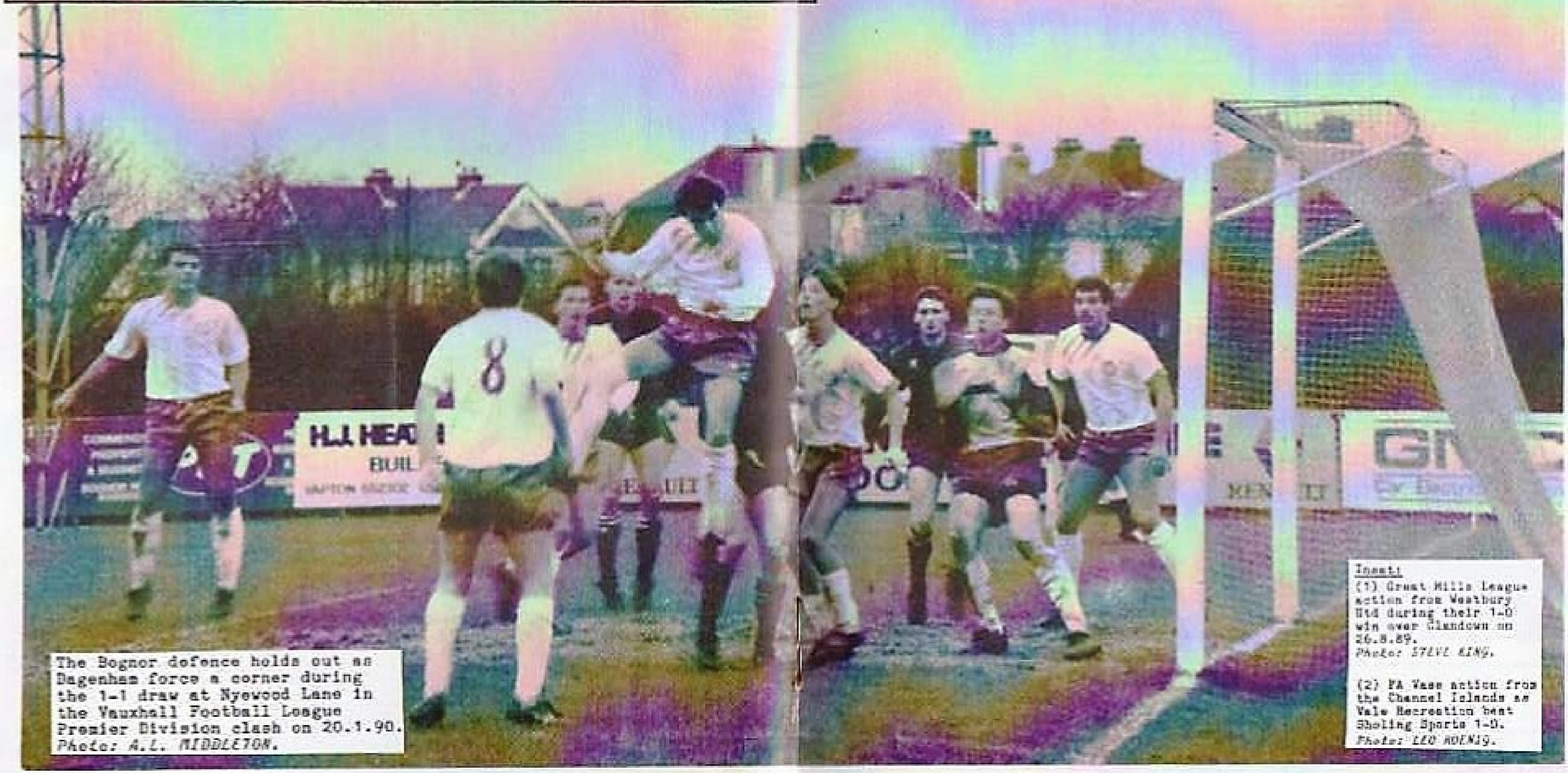
But once it is open, it will offer a huge selection of programmes from both the non-league world and also the Football League, including many rare items. There will also be a limited range of Hornchurch souvenirs on sale including Club Scarves, Hats, Gloves and Club Badges, etc.

If you are planning to visit Hornchurch in the next couple of weeks or so and specifically want to visit the shop, it may be advisable to give them a ring first to make sure the shop will be open.

RATING OUT OF 10 ...... Not applicable.







The Bognor defence holds out as Dagenham force a corner during the 1-1 draw at Nyewood Lane in the Vauxhall Football League Premier Division clash on 20.1.90.
Photo: A.L. MIDDLETON.

Inset:
(1) Great Mills League action from Westbury Utd during their 1-0 win over Clandown on 26.8.89.
Photo: STEVE KING.

(2) FA Vase action from the Channel Islands as Vale Recreation beat Sholing Sports 1-0.
Photo: LEO HOENIG.

MY SURREY SAFARI AND HAMPSHIRE HOP - BY GRAHAM MITCHELL

This lightning tour around Surrey starts in the east of the county just off the A3 London-Portsmouth Road at Motspur Park, New Malden which is the home of London Universities Elysees side who play in the Greene King Spartan League. The ground, which is also an athletics track was recently featured in the television series 'Four Minute Mile'. Cover is provided by a 250 seater wooden grandstand, whilst the remainder of the ground is flat standing. There are no floodlights or clubhouse.
Within five minutes drive of Motspur Park can be found the grounds of Malden Vale and Malden Town (VFL and Dan-Air League), Worcester Park and also Surbiton Town (Surrey Premier), Pearl Assurance (Southern Amateur), as well as two new grounds, Corinthian Casuals, who, following their merger with Tolworth FC are now based at the King George Sports Ground, Tolworth, which is located just off Hook Rise South (A3 Kingston by-pass), and Kingstonian whose new home is at the Norbiton Sports Ground in Great Cambridge Road, on the outskirts of Kingston.
Surrey Premier Leaguers St. Andrews play at Morfax's Private Sports Ground in Carshalton Road, Mitcham. There are two full-sized football pitches but no cover other than a solitary wooden dugout, the Nissan Hut-style clubhouse and changing rooms behind the near goal have also seen better days.
Three miles to the south is Sutton, home of Vauxhall Conference United. Their Gander Green Lane ground have been extensively featured on television and various magazines over the last couple of years following their excellent progress in the FA Cup.



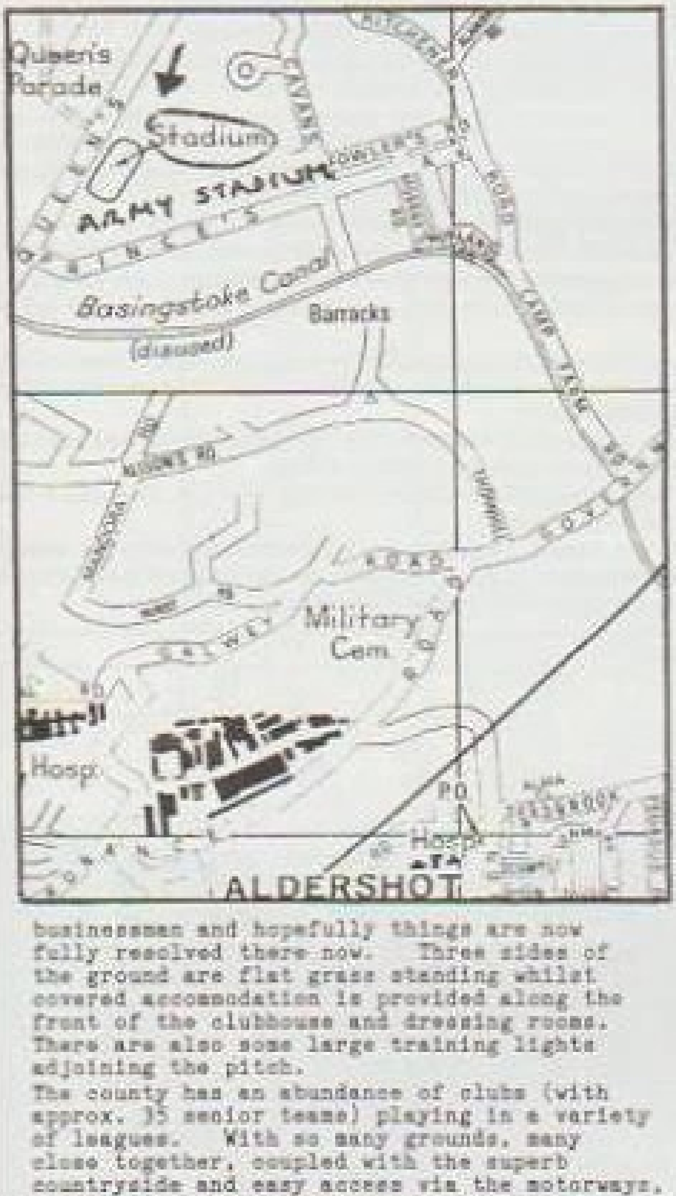
Stand at Fleet Town.

Redhill nowadays play in the Sussex County League First Division having recently transferred from the Spartan League. Their relatively new base is in Three Arch Road at the junction with Horley Road (A23). Although occupied since the mid-eighties, Kilnbrow is still being developed and the car-park resembled a building site on my last visit. However, the ground is fully enclosed, has floodlights, covered standing accommodation for 100 behind the goal, a 250 seat stand and a clubhouse with bar, gym and hall.

Next stop is at Old Schools Lane, West Ewell (2 miles from Epsom), home of regular Vase entrants Old Salesians, who play in the Southern Amateur League. Their ground is located off Spring Street which in turn is off the High Street. Nearest station is Ewell West and the ground is probably familiar to those travelling on the Epsom-Waterloo line. The clubhouse is situated behind the near goal, with a large covered area, including some fixed seating, beneath the extensive overhang, the remainder of the ground is flat standing. There are a further three football pitches and a cricket pitch on the same site.
If you continue along Ewell High Street, the next turning off on the right is West Street. After about half a mile, you come to the home of Vauxhall Football League Division 2 South side Epsom & Ewell. This club was on the brink of extinction in the early seventies and the ground very delapidated, but miracles were worked. Then in the County League, they went on to reach the first FA Vase final and in the space of a few short years found themselves in the Premier Division of the Isthmian League. They have since slipped back into the Second Division but West Street benefitted from their rapid rise and now, in addition to a 250 seater grandstand and concrete terracing, boasts floodlights and a new clubhouse, built in the early eighties.
Further west is Guildford, former home of Southern League Guildford City, and later Guildford & Worplesdon. However, both clubs folded following ground difficulties, leaving Guildford until the demise of Bedford Town, as the largest town without a senior football club in England. The local council have recently revealed plans to build a new sports and leisure complex, incorporating a football stadium, to enable senior football to return to the town. The plans have run into local opposition so we will have to await the outcome.
Frimley Green is a couple of miles from Junction 4 of the M3 motorway with the local Dan-Air League side's ground being situated in Frimley Road. The club folded temporarily in 1989 and failed to complete their fixtures but they were rescued by a local



The Sportsman's Club at Fleet Town FC.



businessman and hopefully things are now fully resolved there now. Three sides of the ground are flat grass standing whilst covered accommodation is provided along the front of the clubhouse and dressing rooms. There are also some large training lights adjoining the pitch.

The county has an abundance of clubs (with approx. 35 senior teams) playing in a variety of leagues. With so many grounds, many close together, coupled with the superb countryside and easy access via the motorways, Surrey is a must for all groundhoppers. Further information can be obtained from the Surrey County F.A. at Waltrix House, Oak Road, Leatherhead (Tel No. 0372-373543).

On a recent visit to Hampshire I managed to visit five new grounds, four in the Hampshire League and one Charrington Chiltonian.

Liphook is on the Surrey-Hampshire border, the local side played in Division One of the Hampshire League until recently, but sadly have withdrawn from this league now. Their Liphook Recreation Ground is located off the A3 London-Portsmouth Road just before entering the village. The ground is fairly basic, there is a car park and the pitch is roped off along one side. Behind the far goal are the changing rooms and what appears to be a press box. The only cover is beneath the overhang of the changing rooms.

Liss is situated on the West Sussex-Hampshire border and until 1987 the team competed in the West Sussex League. The ground (in Hill Brow Lane approx. 1 mile from the A3) is behind the local school in Newton Collard Playing Fields and is even more basic than Liphook's. The changing rooms and team rooms are situated behind the near goal, but otherwise there is nothing to separate the pitch from the rest of the playing fields which also include a children's playground.

If the first two grounds were basic, the next two were certainly not. Alton has a population of 15,000 and is situated to the west of the A31 between Aldershot and Winchester. There are two sides based in the town, namely Alton Town and Bass (Alton). Alton Town were founder members of the Athenian League and boast one of the best grounds in the league. This ambitious club have recently announced plans to erect floodlights and build new dressing rooms to add to the already impressive facilities. There is ample car parking outside the ground, and inside is a grandstand capable of holding 300 and covered accommodation for a further 1000. The rest of the surround is hard standing, capacity is around 3000. Anstey Park is also home to the local rugby and squash clubs.

100 yards further along Anstey Road on the left hand side is the home of works side Bass (Alton). Car parking space is fairly limited although you can always use Anstey Park. Three sides are flat grass standing with the pitch being roped off, and on the other side is the social club, changing rooms and a wooden grandstand with approx. 250 seats. Fleet is perhaps best known for the motorway service station on the M3 but it is also the home of Wessex League side Fleet Town. Fleet seem to have spent the eighties being relegated, first from the Athenian then Combined Counties Leagues and also the Surrey Premier. Nevertheless, Calthorpe Park is neat and tidy, it is fully enclosed and the pitch is railed off. On the halfway line is a small wooden stand with seating for 50-60, the remainder of the surround is flat

PHOTOS KINDLY SUPPLIED BY GRAHAM MITCHELL.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31



IT'S BRIGGSY CALLIN'
WITH RICHARD BRIGGS

★ THIS MONTH: FOCUS ON NORTH DEVON ★

North Devon is the home of four Great Mills League clubs who all have excellent facilities. And besides being able to visit these grounds, a trip to the region will enable you to see some beautiful countryside.

Torrington is the premier division side that represents Great Torrington, a small town with a population of about 4,000 some 10 miles from the North Devon coast and 12 miles east of the Cornish border.

The football team, struggling a little this season, were formed in 1908 and play at the Vicarage Field, which is just off the town centre. It is in Calf Street, which merges into New Street, the A386.

The ground has a capacity of 4,000 and as you enter from the town centre, you will see the paying in box and toilet block on your left. On the near side of the pitch as you enter is some terraced cover for 300 people, while on the far side is covered accommodation for a further 500 people, trainers' boxes, the social club and dressing rooms. The ground also has floodlights and around the railed off pitch are advertising boards.

The Super Greens joined the Western League's first division in 1984 after being members of the South Western League, the Devon and Exeter League and the North Devon League. They won promotion to the Western League's premier division in 1988, but this season, managed by former Plymouth Argyle boss John Hore, they are struggling. This term, Torrington are issuing a good programme with a shiny cover which has an action picture with a good view of the ground on it.

Torrington's main claim to fame is that they groomed Exeter City goalkeeper Dave Walter. Walter, who went to Yeovil Town for £2,000 from Torrington in 1986, later joined the Grecians and was a regular between the sticks for the fourth division outfit until being dropped in December 1989.

Eight miles north of Great Torrington on the A386 is the town of Bideford. The ride between the two towns is very enjoyable as you drive alongside the River Torridge, partly through a tunnel of trees.

Bideford has a population of about 13,000 and is very famous for its ancient bridge. There is now also a new bridge over the Torridge which towers about 80 feet above the water.

The town, which is very near the coast, has a fair few shops, including tourist shops, and there are always boats moored in the river right by the town centre. Beware when using the car park on The Quay - it is right by the water and there are no barriers stopping you from reversing out of your space and straight into it!



The football ground's address is the Sports Ground, Kingsley Road, although the main entrance to premier division side Bideford's superb stadium is at the end of a dead end road called The Strand. This is just off The Quay - it runs alongside the shopping centre - which merges into Kingsley Road.

The ground has a capacity of 6,000, and features a car park and an impressive social club/office block complex. The only cover at the ground though is roofed terracing for 1,000 people which runs alongside the Kingsley Road side of the ground. The pitch is railed off and features advertising boards, and trainers' boxes, but the most striking aspects of the stadium are the floodlights. These are of the Football League variety, one large pylon in each corner of the ground, and they can be seen from all over the town. Each pylon has 10 light bulbs.

Bideford Football Club, nicknamed the Robins, were formed in 1946 and joined the Western League in 1949, staying until 1972 when they moved to the Southern League. They returned to the Western League in 1975 and have won the title and the League Cup.

Bideford have reached the first round of the FA Cup four times. In the 1964-65 season, they went out to Colchester United after a replay, in the 1973-74 campaign they lost to Bristol Rovers and four years later, they fell to Portsmouth. The last time they appeared in the first round was in the 1981-82 season when they were dumped out by Barking. Bideford, who issue quite a good programme, are hoping to build a grandstand at the Sports Ground.

Nine miles north east of Bideford up the A39 is Barnstaple, which is the main town in North Devon, having a

population of 20,000. Visitors to the area may wonder why the bay that lies to the west of Barnstaple and Bideford bears both towns' names - the reason is that they have argued for centuries about whose it is, so it is simply called Barnstaple or Bideford Bay.

Barnstaple Town, who play in the Great Mills League's premier section, have one of the best grounds in the league. The ground is in Mill Road, which is very easy to locate, just off Rolle Street, which merges into Braunton Road, the A361. It is quite close to the town centre.

The ground is in the district of Pottington and is surrounded by houses and an industrial estate. The Mill Road ground has a capacity of 5,000, the newest addition to its facilities being floodlights which were installed quite recently.

Barnstaple, nicknamed Barum, were formed in 1895 and played in the North Devon League and South Western League before entering the Western League in 1948. Their honours include the Western League championsip and Merit Cup.

The club, like Bideford, have reached the first round of the FA Cup on four occasions, three times in the 1950s when they met Folkestone, Bournemouth and Exeter, and latterly in the 1972-73 season when they lost to Bilston. The ground's record attendance of 6,200 was set in the home cup tie with Bournemouth in 1954.

Current league attendances are around 300, but the ground and the size of the town warrants bigger crowds. The ground has a car park and you enter through turnstiles. Immediately as you enter, you see a club shop, which is of the hatch variety, and on your right is the social club. The social club side of the ground features covered terracing for 1,000 people, with the trainers' boxes in front of it. Inside the terracing are a few benches.

Behind the near goal as you enter are the dressing rooms and some terracing, while the far goal is backed by grass standing.

The other side of the ground features an excellent 206 seat grandstand, grass standing, hard standing and terracing. The pitch is railed off and features advertising boards. The club issue an excellent programme which is fully typeset and includes photographs.

Next month, I shall complete the round up of groundhopping in the North Devon district, with a look at Barnstaple Rugby Club's ground, Ilfracombe Town Football Club's arena and places of interest to visit in the region.



GROUNDS IN FOCUS



WIMBORNE TOWN (Medisport Wessex League) - *Photo: TIM LANCASTER.*



Chris Ashbridge writes

EXCLUSIVE!

I'm not normally one to blow my own trumpet, but I feel that I can make an exception with regards to the articles I wrote in issues 15 and 26 of *GROUNDHOPPER MAGAZINE* about football in the Faeroe Islands. I write this only days after it was announced that not only would the Faeroes be participating in the qualifying rounds of the 1992 Euro championship, but that they would be competing in the same group as one of the British teams, Northern Ireland! All this has come as a total surprise to me, as I didn't even have any knowledge of the fact that they had applied to take part. The point I'm trying to make here is that all this success of the Faeroes has justified the fact that I took the trouble to give them a write-up in GHM, something that some other readers apparently didn't like. In future, you know who to ask if you're looking for information on Faeroes football!

It also came as a total surprise to me to hear that another tiny country, San Marino, was also accepted as an entry to the 1992 Euro championship (they have been drawn in the same group as Scotland). While the Faeroes will probably have to play their home games elsewhere - possibly in Reykjavic - as a result of UEFA's ban on plastic pitches, San Marino will, I think, have no such problems, as they have an impressive stadium with a grass pitch.

Groundhoppers may therefore be able to add San Marino to their list of 'ticks' for an international match. Any groundhopper wishing to go to the Faeroes will probably have to do so for league matches.

Personally, this doesn't bother me, as one of my little idiosyncrasies is that I prefer to visit national stadiums for club matches ie; when I visited Windsor Park in 1987 it was for a Linfield home match and not a Northern Ireland home match as might well have been the case for other groundhoppers.

I'm not really supposed to be writing about continental soccer (well, you lot apparently don't want me to) so let's get back to the more familiar territory of English non-league soccer. Over the last few weeks the south of England has been battered by non-stop gales and heavy rain, and in particular on Saturday 3rd February, when virtually every match in the south was called off. I was fortunate in seeing a match that day, when I headed north to watch a Trophy tie at Leek. It is indeed a strange state of affairs when the north of England should be regularly getting better weather than the south of England, and one can only speculate as to whether all these mild, wet winters of these past 3 years are a result of a global warning.

Still, all this rain must be preferable to having a 'big freeze' like the ones we had in 1985, 1986 and 1987. When there is a 'big freeze' virtually the whole country is hit, but when there is rain, it tends to affect only certain areas, enabling the determined groundhopper to head for the drier areas. I shall be writing a more detailed column on the subject of bad weather - and how to avoid it - in a future issue.

The other major topic of interest in non-league football is probably the extraordinary number of clubs currently moving grounds. I have already visited the new grounds at Ashford Town, Kingstonian and Witton Albion, all in August in order to avoid the wet weather which tends to hit new grounds badly. Witton Albion are, at the time of writing, suffering serious drainage problems with their pitch. However, their spectator facilities cannot be faulted. There is sufficient terracing around the pitch, although admittedly it is a bit shallow, and there are seats along the full length of one side. The steel barrier around the pitch is so strong that it has to be seen to be believed. The spectator facilities at Ashford Town's new ground are, in contrast with Witton, a disappointment. The ground is so far from Ashford that it is not even in Kingsworth as listed in books, directories etc, but well into the Kent countryside. There have been rumours that Ashford may move again in a few years time. If this turns out to be the case, then the next ground will probably be next to the Channel Tunnel entrance. As for Kingstonian, they have a picturesque stand (but little terracing) at their new ground, but what they should be praised for is their pitch which drains so well that it was apparently the only one in London (Feltham were not playing at home) to stage a match on the ultra-wet Saturday 3rd February. There can't be a groundhopper who hasn't been to Kingstonian's new ground yet.

The early months of next season will be, for me at least, occupied with visiting the new grounds at Wycombe, Yeovil, Dorchester, Grantham, etc, etc. It's not just non-league football too - Walsall will certainly be at a new ground next season, and I read in the Daily Telegraph that Northampton are on the verge of moving to a new ground. If this is true, then this may be a reference to the much discussed Brackmills development to the south of Northampton town centre which includes a 15,000 all-seat athletics stadium for use by the football club. Northampton Town desperately need to move, as they are handicapped by the fact that their ground is shared with cricket. If the ground were to be used for cricket only, it might become a potential future Test Match venue, as it already boasts a good pitch and a new pavilion.

However, it is probably true to say that, because of the Taylor Report, many 3rd and 4th Division clubs will have moved to new grounds by the year 2000. For the time being, we can only await with bated breath the new non-league grounds that will appear next season. Yeovil in particular should be very interesting, as press reports suggest that the capacity of their new ground could be anywhere from 8,000 to 12,000 and that the number of seats could vary from 5,000 to 6,500. One report has even suggested that the ground might be oval shaped (if this is true, I hope that it is more akin to Hereford than Chelsea).

Apart from ground moves, one aspect of non-league football that I find a little bothersome is what one might call the 'deja vu' syndrome. This is something most groundhoppers will have experienced. It concerns the fact that you keep watching the same

away team at grounds you visit, even though you don't support them. In my case, I always seem to end up watching Dunstable play. I have seen them play at Cambridge City (old ground), Ruislip, Andover (old ground), Brache Sparta and Ashcroft Co-Op (old ground again!). The first three being for Southern League matches, and the last two for Bedfordshire Senior Cup ties. I do not have any affection for Dunstable, it is just that by a quirk of the fixture list that they are always playing away to a club I want to visit. Likewise, I have seen Bury Town play in 3 away matches at Stowmarket's new ground, Ely City's new ground and at Andover - yes, you've guessed it, another new ground! (This reminds me, incidentally, that GHM's recent 4-page pull-out feature on

Cont'd on page 35

BEAZER VISA



with **TOBY JACKSON**

Welcome back to BEAZER VISA. It's black arm-band time at Lower Mead after a truly dismal month, one of those fortunately rare months when one considers alternative entertainment to fill Saturday afternoons.

For many Stones fans, Wealdstone's season ended on January 16th when our F.A. Trophy replay at Harrow Borough ended in a sorry 1-0 defeat. Over 2200 supporters watched the two ties between the local rivals, an ideal opportunity to impress the Harrow public and lure a few hundred extra fans through the turnstiles in following weeks. Sadly the Stones players did not share the fervour of local rivalry that had fired up the travelling Wealdstone supporters for weeks beforehand.

Harrow Borough's Earlsmead ground enjoys a good playing surface and floodlights well above par. A prospering Social complex is found behind one of the two terraced, but open, ends. Down one touchline is found a main stand of modest proportions with covered areas of terracing on either side. Opposite is a long covered terrace with a tidy Club Shop and Tea Bar at one end near the corner turnstiles. The Boro programme was 45p for 24 pages (9 of ads between glossy covers): pretty standard content with some interesting spellings on the "Introducing our Opponants" (sic) page.



The main stand at Harrow Borough.



Hounslow under floodlights.

Wealdstone's first chance to "apologise" to disappointed supporters came four days later with the visit of Alvechurch to Lower Mead. Two off the bottom Alvechurch were somewhat unfortunate to lose to a single penalty when the otherwise excellent Watson brought down Kelly in the area. Goyette clinched three points from the spot-kick.

Two nights later came our reward for beating Edgware Town in the Middlesex Senior Cup - a trip to Denbigh Road, the home of Hounslow FC. The floodlighting did not permit much in the way of photography. The pitch was in poor condition. An old-fashioned wooden grandstand ran two-thirds of the length of the pitch. Opposite was an expanse of covered terracing out of bounds to the public, not that the public had flooded

into the ground this particular evening. Behind one goal was a slim area of terracing and high netting, and behind the other a path with more netting high enough to cope with the majority of our shooting. The Club Shop was a brick construction at the rear of a garage. Stuart Chatterton had amassed a fair stock of programmes and a good variety of club badges (from yours truly). A Football Club badge and a smaller Supporters Club badge were on sale. Space was limited but all credit to Stuart for his solitary efforts. The tea bar was behind the main stand offering a good selection of hot food, and further along the same side of the pitch was a social club with a mini-version of the Blackpool illuminations hung along the outside. A fair ground for the Beazer Southern section. The Stones took a first-half lead through a John Collins headed flick after both sides had hit the bar (wooden not alcoholic - though by the state of Dave Flint's performance??). Hounslow deservedly equalised early into the second period to set up a replay a week later. The soccer was of less interest than the continuous stream of aeroplanes descending over the ground to Heathrow; three in the air approaching at any one time giving plenty of scope to even a learner double-glazing salesman. The Hounslow programme was 30p for 20 pages (9 of ads).



A smile to greet you in the Hounslow club shop.



A familiar face at the Giant New Year Programme Fair.

The following Saturday came our return to League inaction with the long trip down to Dorset. I had seen a previous Conference game against Telford at Weymouth's new Wessex Stadium, but this was my debut there to view the Stones as I had missed the Clubcall midweek win there back in October. I had been talked into compiling a match report for this League encounter for a new local sports paper, so I was fortunate to be given an appropriate theme for the afternoon when the sound system greeted the sides onto the pitch to the strains of the Billy Smart's Circus overture. The wet and windy conditions added to the inadequacies of both sides who would not have conjured up a goal in a month had it not been for Alan Risk's 4th minute own goal which gave the home side three points.

The Weymouth programme was a professional-looking 24 pages for 50p (11 of ads) with a full-colour photo of their excellent stand on the cover. The rest of the ground was also geared to a higher level of football though it will take a time for the stadium to adopt an atmosphere of its own as opposed to the cold purpose-built feel it presently has. The Club Shop and car parking facilities are excellent though the bar was cramped and inadequate.

Cont'd next page

BEAZER VISA (from page 29).

Ashford's quagmire of a pitch finally persuaded them to switch the venue for our 3rd Round Clubcall tie to Wealdstone. It was a decision about which they need not have worried as Wealdstone again showed little enthusiasm for a battle in the poor conditions that limited the crowd to just 102. Both sides in fact seemed wary of the prize for winning - a quarter-final tie at all-conquering Colne Dynamoes who could probably have coped with Ashford & Wealdstone at once! Again the Stones conjured up a solitary goal defeat deflecting a harmless shot into our own net. Ashford unusually sold their own programme at Wealdstone - 50p for 40 pages (a massive 27 of ads) - our thank-you for the switch of venue coupled of course with a performance of equal generosity.



Weymouth FC.



The impressive grandstand at Weymouth.

Only 137 devotees bothered to come and see the County Cup replay with Hounslow. To their credit Wealdstone managed a slightly more spirited performance and put away four of the four dozen chances they created without reply. Now the semi-final beckons with either Hendon or Yeading as opposition. How sad, however, to be in February and only to have this one mediocre trophy left to play for. Still, Enfield's 4-1 defeat at Uxbridge in the same Cup coupled with a relegation fight should make us grateful for small mercies.

My month ended as it started with a defeat, Gloucester City winning 3-2 at Lower Mead and your humble correspondent feeling as if we might never win again. It really is amazing how a game of football can make or ruin a week-end! I'm off to Cambridge City, Burton Albion, Ashford and Corby next: I hope to see you next month!

ALL PHOTOS KINDLY SUPPLIED BY TONY JACKSON.

FOCUS ON.......CHRISTCHURCH

The "Prioryman" have been playing at their Avon Causeway Ground for about four seasons now, having previously played at the Recreation Ground on Barrack Road.
Their new home is around three miles from the town centre and is difficult to reach by public transport as the only bus service, the 105 route, goes to Jumpers Corner which is about 1½ miles from the ground. So it is advisable to either walk or get a taxi.
The football only forms part of the sports club, sharing with cricket. The football pitch is in one corner of the ground.
There is a metal rail surrounding the playing area, with floodlights positioned in each corner. The only cover is an overhang from the clubhouse, unfortunately this is at the wrong angle to the pitch. A tea-bar is situated near the dressing rooms, with rolls etc available in the excellent clubhouse along with (for real ale fans) Marstons Pedigree on handpump.

Christchurch's clubhouse is probably the best in the Wessex League, and is comfortably furnished and a friendly welcome awaits.

A programme is issued for every match including reserve matches in the Bournemouth League. There are 24 pages, including a glossy blue and white cover.

Trains for Christchurch leave Waterloo at 45 minutes past each hour if you want a direct route, otherwise there are trains where you need to change at Brockenhurst. Direct trains on Saturdays are:- 10.45 and 11.45, arriving Christchurch at 12.39 and 13.39. Return trains leave Christchurch at 17.09 and 18.09, getting back to Waterloo at 19.05 or 20.05. Return fare is about £15 unless you possess a Network Card in which case you can save 33%.

Christchurch offers plenty to the tourist. The priory ruins being popular, the town is also handy for Bournemouth, Poole and the New Forest. There are a number of good pubs in the area, the best one being the Castle Tavern on Church Street, serving a wide range of traditional beers and excellent home-cooked food. This pub is also listed in the 1989 Good Beer Guide.
There are also a number of restaurants and take-aways situated around the town to suit all tastes.



SURREY SAFARI (from page 23)

grass standing. The ground has floodlights, an impressive members-only Sportsmans Club and ample car parking. Since my visit, the club have started climbing the ladder again, having been elected to the Wessex League for season 1989-90.

The Hampshire League may have lost lost most of its better clubs to the recently formed Wessex League, to which clubs are now promoted, but it is still of a reasonable standard and many clubs issue programmes.
Footnote: Another ground worth visiting in Hampshire is the Army's impressive Military Stadium in Queens Avenue, Aldershot. The ground, which is also used as an athletics stadium, has superb floodlights, a large grandstand and three sides of grass banking.



Grandstand at Epsom & Ewell.



WELSH NON-LEAGUE GUIDE

PART ONE

One of the most popular areas of Britain that groundhoppers head for on a regular basis is Wales. There seems to be something about it which attracts hoppers from all over the UK. Some of the grounds are set in the most picturesque areas to be found anywhere, and there are also contrasts which also has an appeal of its own for travellers. Places such as Ton Pentre, Merthyr Tydfil and the like in South Wales and the heart of the valleys compare favourably with North Wales grounds such as Bangor City, Rhyl etc.

There are also interesting coastal and holiday areas as well such as Aberystwyth Town to make the trip even more enjoyable.
The Welsh are extremely friendly and hospitable folk, the scenery is fantastic, and the grounds are, in the main, a joy to visit.

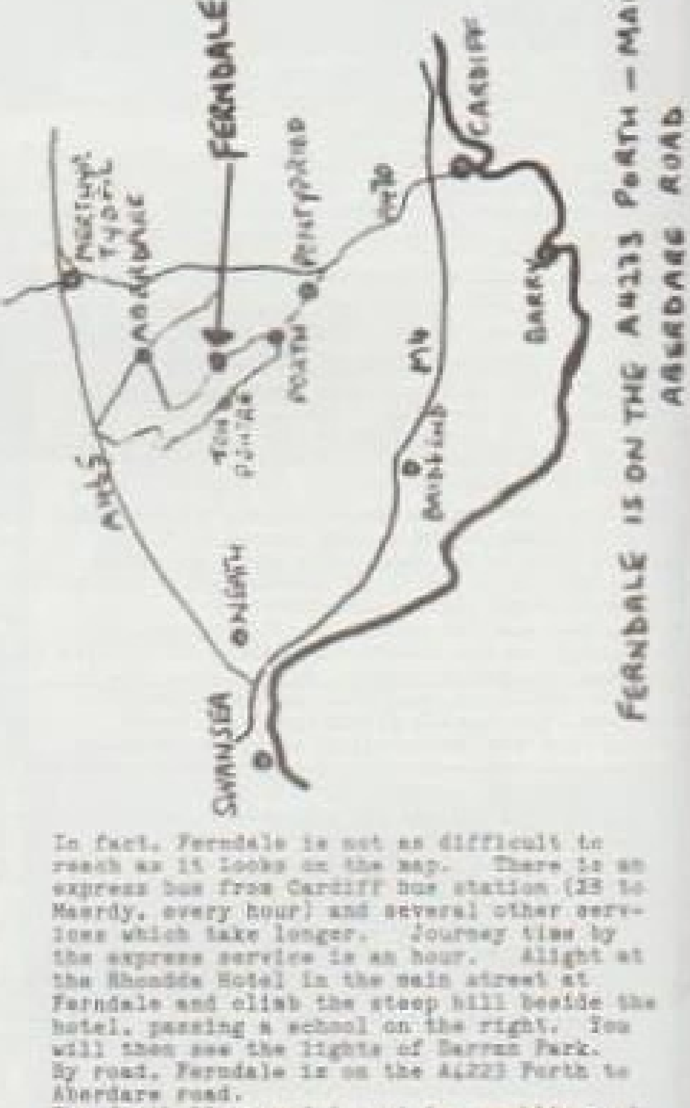
This brief guide to some of the more remote grounds or less well known places may be useful to groundhoppers planning a visit to the land of the leek in the coming months.
Thanks go to David Collins for his assistance in helping to compile this guide.

CAERLEON AFC (Abacus Welsh, Premier Div.).
Caerleon of the Abacus Welsh League Premier Division are based at Cold Bath Road, close to the centre of the small town of Caerleon, two miles north east of Newport in Gwent.
Despite being so close to Newport, Caerleon has an identity of its own and is one of the most historic towns in Wales, largely as a result of its extensive associations with the Romans. Indeed, the football club's nickname is even the "Romans".
The Cold Bath Road ground is a couple of minutes walk from the common and High Street, and is easy to reach, either by car or public transport. By car, leave the M4 at junction 24 or 25 and approach Caerleon from the south over the river Usk bridge. By



public transport, travel to Newport by rail and catch the frequent bus service to Caerleon from Newport bus station (the bus takes less than 15 minutes).
The football ground has an airy, rural feel to it. It has a stand, painted in club colours of green, containing wooden steps but no seats. It would hold about 200 spectators. The rest of the ground consists of flat grass standing room around the railed pitch. There is a clubhouse behind the goal where refreshments are served. The ground does not have floodlights.
Caerleon issue match programmes for most 1st-team matches containing manager's notes, line-ups, visitors' details and an up-to-date league table etc.

FERNDALE ATHLETIC (Abacus Welsh, Premier Div)
Ferndale Athletic, who finished in sixth position in the Premier Division last season after a disastrous season in 1987-88, are situated rather off the beaten track in the smaller of the two Rhondda valleys (the Rhondda Fach), and may not be an obvious destination for groundhoppers. But they have one very relevant asset - a floodlit, omniturf pitch. So, when the elements have forced the postponement of your other choices, Ferndale might just be the place to head for.



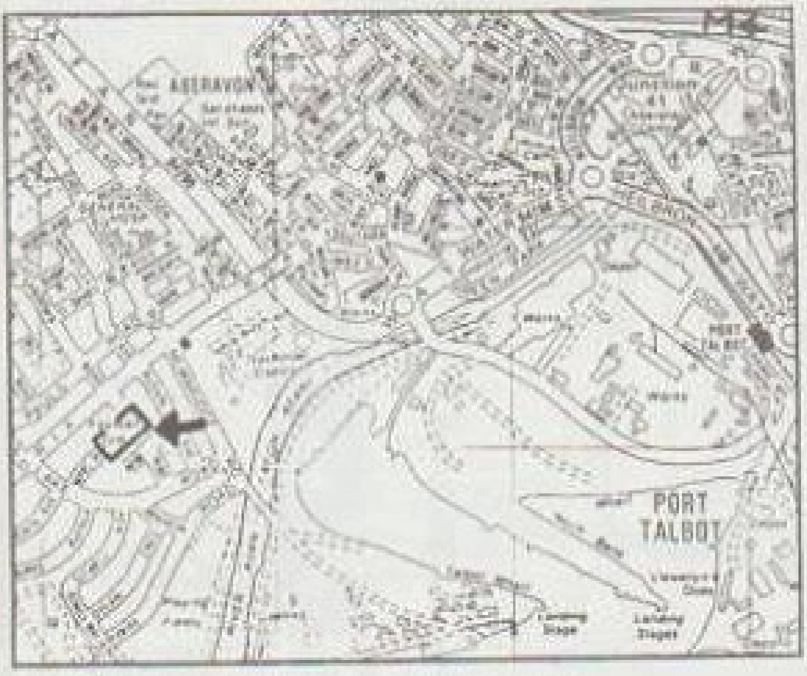
In fact, Ferndale is not as difficult to reach as it looks on the map. There is an express bus from Cardiff bus station (23 to Maerdy, every hour) and several other services which take longer. Journey time by the express service is an hour. Alight at the Rhondda Hotel in the main street at Ferndale and climb the steep hill beside the hotel, passing a school on the right. You will then see the lights of Darran Park.
By road, Ferndale is on the A4223 Porth to Aberdare road.
The football ground is set in a public park

containing a boating lake, tennis courts, bowling green, etc. The all-weather pitch is enclosed on three sides by a tall wire-mesh fence, and spectator accommodation is really limited to the fourth side. There is an attractive 150-seater stand which has recently been re-roofed, and some uncovered bench seats. Hot drinks are sold from a pavillion just outside the main gate.

Ferndale do not seem to issue programmes for all games, but they are a friendly little club. In the late 1970's, Ferndale competed in the F.A. Trophy, but nowadays restrict themselves to domestic competitions.

PORT TALBOT ATHLETIC (Abacus Welsh, National Div).

Athletic were among the founders of the National League's earliest predecessor, the South Wales League, formed in 1902. The



club's league honours are confined to two Div.2 (West) championships in 1957 and 1962 and as recently as 1983 they were playing in the lowest of the Welsh League's three divisions. But in 1983 they won promotion and one year later were invited to make the further step up into the National Division. They made an immediate impression, finishing 3rd in 1984-85, but have since struggled, finishing bottom in 1985-86 and 15th (of 17) in 1986-87. Last season, they finished in a comfortable 12th position.

A couple of seasons ago they reached the 4th Round of the Welsh Cup before going out at Ninian Park as Cardiff City beat them 3-1.

The ground is at Victoria Road near Aberavon Beach. As you enter the ground from Victoria Road, to your right, near the halfway line, you will see a small stand constructed of breeze blocks with a sloping corrugated iron roof. Behind the stand are the dressing rooms. The rest of the ground consists of rough grass banking, with a rather old clubhouse building in one corner serving refreshments before, during and after matches. There are no floodlights at the ground.

Getting there by public transport means a trip to Port Talbot Parkway station on the Paddington to Swansea main line, with a journey time of about 2½ hours. On leaving the station, cross the A48 by the footbridge and walk along Station Road (pedestrians are not allowed on the A48). Turn left when you reach the pedestrian precinct and follow this back road over the river under the railway, then use the underpass which soon becomes Water Street. Turn right (sign for Aberavon Beach) into Yeguthan Road into Victoria Road. The ground is on the left. By car, leave the M4 at Junction 40, turn left onto the A4107, then right onto the A48, then follow the Aberavon Beach signs which take you into Victoria Road. Programmes are normally issued for 1st team games of about 20 pages including smart blue and white cover. Less than half a mile away from Port Talbot's ground is that of another Welsh League club, Afan Lido, who play at the Sports Centre by Aberavon promenade.

CWMBRAN TOWN (Abacus Welsh, National Div).

A Gwent club who finished fourth from bottom of the National Division last season. They play at the Cwmbran Stadium, a major athletics venue to the south of the new town of Cwmbran.

If travelling by public transport, catch a train to Cwmbran on the Newport to Hereford line, and walk south for about 20 minutes,



CONT'D ON PAGE 35

PROGRAMME SCENE

RON JONES



A new club on the programme scene this season are NORTON UNITED of the Staffs Senior League and the 50p admission charge includes a 12 page issue, with the matchday content covering the centre spread. Manager's notes and a brief introduction to the day's opponents provide the content, along with the line-ups, and with the glossy cover enhancing the overall impression, it is one to look out for with the 'one per club' collectors.

Moving to the Northern League, where Division Two club PETERLEE NEWTOWN have an 8-page insert inside which, for the review copy for the F.A.Vase match with Farsley Celtic, gave plenty of coverage of the visitors. The rest of the content comprises club notes and league tables, with the standard pages including details of club personnel and league sponsorship details.

Staying with the Vase, West Allotment Celtic visited Wearside League NEWTON AYCLIFFE where the host club produced their standard programme with eight pages of matchday content inside the usual blue and white cover. The main reading comes from a page each of the manager, chairman and editor's views, with league tables, and an introduction to the visitors completing the content. In the North West Counties League, WARRINGTON TOWN have an informative 24 pager which combines the league newsletter with 12 pages of club content. These include the usual notes, extensive statistical coverage, and pen pics of both teams. The cover is in the club colours of yellow and blue. In the South Midland League, BIGGLESWADE UNITED also come up with a regular 24 pages. All the relevant statistics covering the club's three teams are to be found, along with a page of club notes rounding off the content. The well presented factual coverage enhances this issue, which includes match details on the cover. In the Abacus Welsh League, 30p is asked for PONTLLANFRAITH's 24 page issue, which are all photocopied onto blue paper. Apart from the ads, club details, and a sketch map of the Welsh League, the sole content is the inside back page line-ups, so if this review copy is their regular issue, not up to the standard of their issues in previous seasons. In the Great Mills League Division One, HEAVITREE UNITED have produced an award-winning programme and the current issue from Wingfield Park is no exception, with the 16 pages of content covering an int-

eresting mix of reading and detailed statistics. The 'Memory Lane' page, Programme Parade and a page covering press reports from the past add to the variety, along with detailed match reports and visitors coverage. Contained in a yellow semi-card cover, a fine issue which is included with admission. In the Jewson League, CHATTERIS TOWN have had a traumatic season on the field, and in our review copy, the 24 standard pages, set off by an attractive blue and white cover, contained the team details plus a few lines of notes in a modest issue priced at 20p. Meanwhile, WISBECH TOWN offer 16 pages for 30p, with front page match details and back page line-ups on the fully-printed glossy cover. Apart from the usual matchday info, the results page includes attendances, while a review of the East Anglian scene and brief details of several past seasons occupy a page each. Wisbech also issue for home reserve team matches in the Peterborough League, these run to 8 pages for the 20p asking price. In the United Counties League, STAMFORD turn out a neat programme, which includes an in-depth 2-page club history on the standard pages. The statistical coverage in the review issue is comprehensive, and a distinctive touch is the line-ups which appear in '4-3-3' formation instead of the usual listing. With good visitors coverage and detailed match reports, a creditable issue.

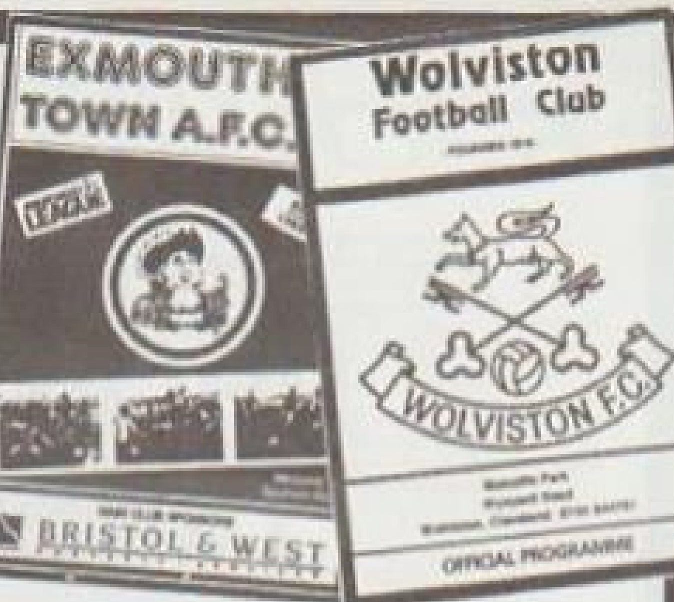
Down in Sussex, County Leaguers WICK issue 8 pages of matchday content including club and managers notes and the usual facts and figures, plus a humorous player profile, and with the glossy cover, no complaints at the 20p charged.

Back in the West Country, there is yet another amazing issue this season from EXMOUTH TOWN, which runs to a fantastic 52 pages and only 14½ pages of adverts. It really is as good as in previous seasons, jam-packed full of interesting articles, superb coverage of the visitors, statistical information, and even photos in every issue. Hard-working Editor Mike Blackstone has won several awards for this programme in recent years, and it is easy to see why. I particularly liked the 'Great North Adventure' series by Mike which each week gave his account of trips north to groundhop, and also the excellent piece on "Todd" the groundhopper who is in fact a dog! He's already been to several West Country grounds, and may be venturing a trip up towards London in the not-too-distant future. To Barking perhaps? Northern Counties East Div.1 side PICKERING TOWN issue a 36-pager this season for 30p, with glossy blue and white cover. Content is good, and includes the manager's column, league newsletter, club notes, league tables on the centre pages, match reports, press cuttings, junior page, etc. Line-ups are on page 3, with match details along the side on page 3 with the edge of the cover cut to size to reveal the day's opponents.

We do not often come across an issue from the Wearside League Division 2, but one we have received comes from WOLVISTON who issue a basic programme consisting of a 4-page photocopied insert inside a glossy blue and white cover overprinted in black. The remaining 3 sides of the cover only contain ads, but the insert contains a page of notes, the centre pages have the team line-ups and Div.1 and 2 league tables of the Wearside League, and the last page has a football quiz, future fixtures, raffle results etc.

Overall, very basic, but at least a club of this size are making the effort and for that they are to be congratulated.

I'll be back next month with another batch of non-league programmes to review, so see you then.



WELSH NON-LEAGUE GUIDE - from p.33

before turning into Henllys Way (see map). By car, travel north on the A4042 and turn off into Llantarnam Road towards Cwmbran town centre, then left into Henllys Way.

The stadium will hold 8,000, with seating for 2,000, so the Town's crowds usually look rather sparse! Cwmbran have, in recent seasons, been competing in the FA Trophy. Match programmes are issued for all first-team matches.



CHRIS ASHBRIDGE WRITES

(from page 27)

Stowmarket Town omitted to mention that they have only been playing at their present ground since 1984-85). On the continent, similar coincidences can happen. I saw Antwerp play in 3 away matches - at R.W.D.M, Lokeren and Waregem before I finally got around to visiting their own ground. But then, the 'deja vu' syndrome should be the least of our groundhopping worries in contrast to the question of bad weather!

★☆★ SMALL ADS ★☆★

Each month in *Groundhopper Magazine*, we are offering readers the chance to advertise in our Classifieds Section of the magazine. If you require or wish to sell programmes, etc., drop us a line with the details (maximum 50 words in advert) by the end of the month to be guaranteed inclusion in the next issue. Space is very limited, so it will be on a first come, first served basis, and the advert will only appear for one issue. Programme Dealers are excluded from this offer, small ads are for private use only. Write to: Groundhopper Magazine Small Ads, Flat 1, 64 Huntingdale Dr, C'Ton. Some ads may be held over due to shortage of space.

* SPARE copies of Issue No.3 and No.5 of "Groundhopper Magazine" available. Covers are a bit grubby but otherwise in good condition. Only 1 of each so first come, first served. Send 50p in stamps + A5 SAE to:-
CHRIS ASHBRIDGE, 64 NURSERY ROAD, SOUTHGATE, LONDON, N14 5QH.

* MANY unusual items in my first non-league programme catalogue. Send SAE or 20p stamp for a copy. Write to:-
DONALD CAMPBELL, 66 WELLGATE STREET, LARKHALL, LANARKSHIRE, SCOTLAND, ML9 2AG.

* TOP PRICES paid for Lincoln City v. Fisher Ath 87-88; Welling Utd v. Fisher Ath 26.12.89 Your lists of Fisher Ath home and aways most welcome.
J. BEALE, 47 COOPERS LANE, LONDON, NW1 1HQ.

* OLD Margatonian Football Club fixture List 1932-33, good condition, first-team players names listed. Siddal Association FC 4-page balance sheet 1906-07, lovely item, will swap for Leeds Utd or Scarborough homes or cash.
DUNCAN LAW, 13 MENLO GARDENS, BEULAH HILL, UPPER NORWOOD, LONDON, SE19 3DT.

* STALYBRIDGE Celtic FC Club Shop welcome non-league football programme exchanges. Still available: 'From Morecambe to Chorley' - a review of last season's debut in the HFS Loans League, Premier Division. Only £2 + 9" x 6" SAE, payment payable to 'Stalybridge Celtic FC Supporters Association'.
KEVIN JONES, 17 LINDSAY ST, STALYBRIDGE, CHESHIRE, SK15 2LD.

GROUNDS IN FOCUS



BILLINGHAM SYNTHONIA (Skol Northern League) - *Photo: D.R. WEST.*

NON-LEAGUE CLUB FOCUS



1989-90

MERTHYR TYDFIL
GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE

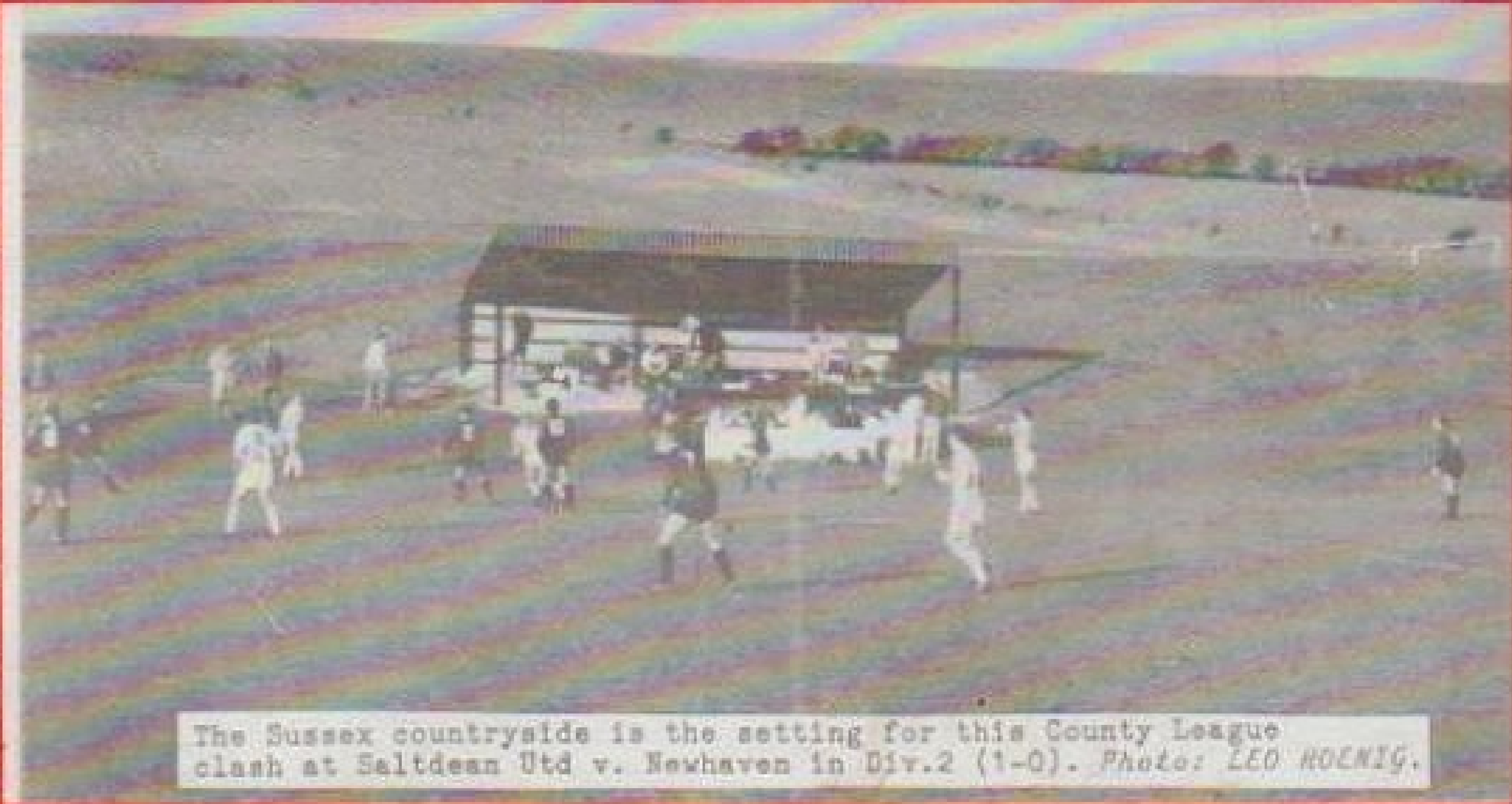
Groundhopper Magazine General Guidance Notes

1. The main aim of the Groundhopper Magazine and the jointly run Groundhoppers Club is to promote Non-League football and to give it's subscribers and club members the opportunity of contributing in the form of articles, letters and photographs, etc.
2. Membership of the Groundhoppers Club is FREE. To join, write to Steve Pettit (Membership Secretary) at the address on the inside front cover, enclosing full details such as your name, address, groundhopping interests, etc. Also, please enclose a s.a.e. for the return of your membership card.
3. Once you become a member you are entitled to certain privileges as outlined in the club literature detailed elsewhere.
4. As a club it will be financed in association with Groundhopper Magazine, and all members will receive an annual statement of accounts at the A.G.M. on a date to be arranged, probably on the day of a convention at a non-league venue to be decided. Full details will appear in the magazine.
5. There will be conventions, organised trips to grounds and fundraising events throughout the year, jointly arranged by the Groundhopper Magazine and Groundhoppers Club.
6. Groundhopper Magazine is published EVERY month throughout the year, with current subscription rates shown on the inside front cover. Contained in each issue are full details of all Club events such as news of conventions, etc.
7. If sending photographs for inclusion in the magazine, please note that there may be a delay in returning them if more than six are sent at once. The process for preparing them for publication is expensive, and we can therefore only use photos for one issue at a time. Please ALWAYS indicate when sending photos whether you would like them returned or whether we can retain them.
8. The magazine is usually despatched on the 15th of each month, subject to copy deadlines being met with our printers. You should receive your magazine about two weeks prior to cover date, ie; January issue received 16th or 17th December.
9. We cannot be held responsible for material being lost in the post when being returned to originator after use (such as photos, etc.)
10. The magazine is available on SUBSCRIPTION ONLY. When you are coming to the end of your subscription we will send you a letter reminding you that it is time to renew, and will enclose a new subscription form.
11. A joint Groundhoppers Club and Magazine Committee has been formed, with the purpose of helping to organise events, help with fund-raising, etc. If YOU would like to join please write to Steve King for full details.
12. A limited number of back issues of Groundhopper Magazine are available from Ron Jones, 24 Poplar Road, Wimbledon, London SW19 3JR. For current availability please check elsewhere in this month's issue.
13. For copy dates for this year's issues, please see elsewhere for full details, which also includes despatch dates for the magazine.
14. Please give the magazine maximum publicity whenever possible, and support us at the Annual General Meeting and at conventions and all organised events.

Please mention Groundhopper Magazine when you write to any of our advertisers

GROUNDHOPPER Magazine

ACTION SHOTS



The Sussex countryside is the setting for this County League clash at Saltdean Utd v. Newhaven in Div.2 (1-0). *Photo: LEO HOENIG.*



Channel Islands action as Rangers take on Sylvans. The match ended all square at 1-1 earlier in the season. *Photo: LEO HOENIG.*